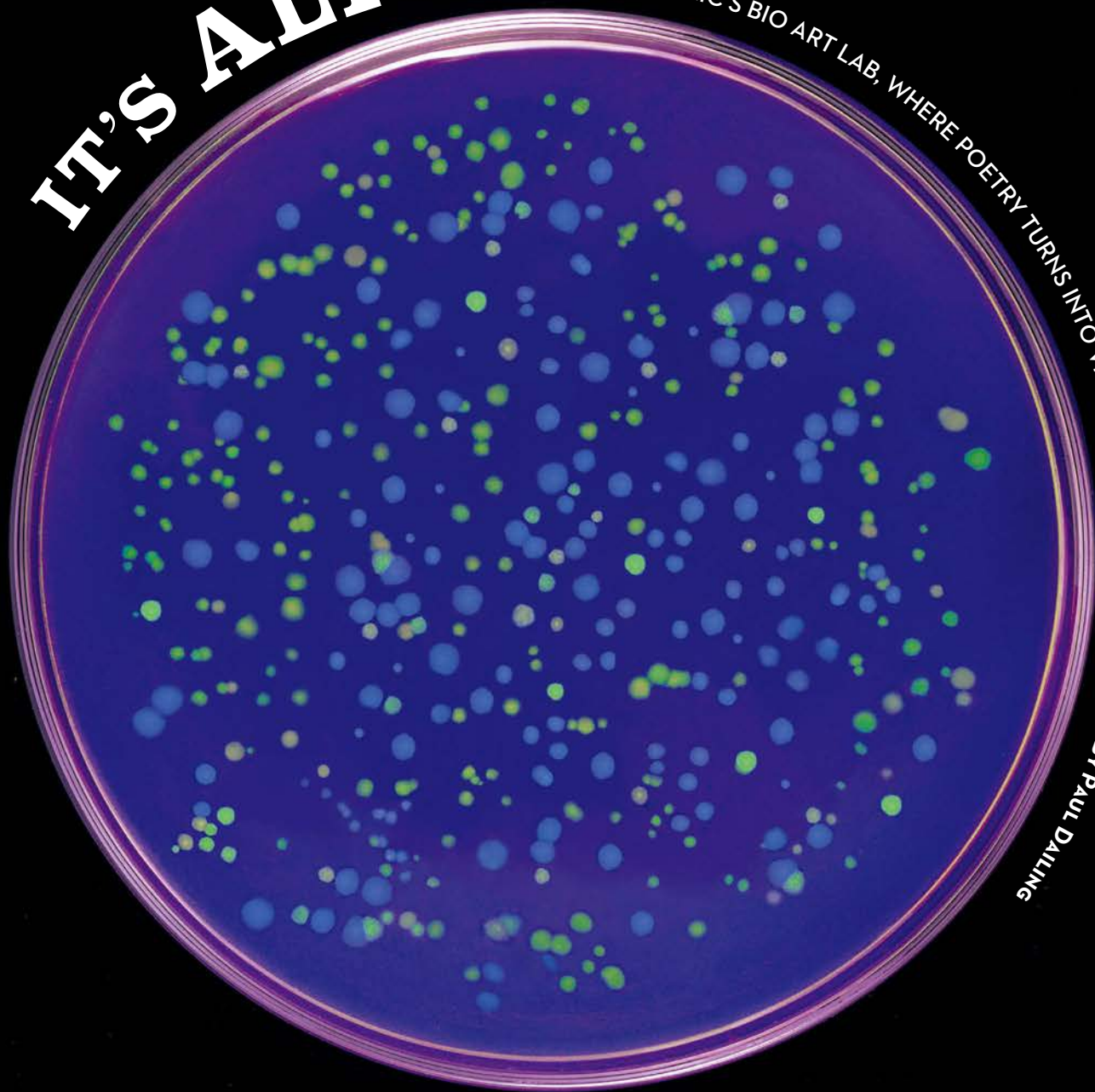


READER

IT'S ALIVE!

INSIDE SAIC'S BIO ART LAB, WHERE POETRY TURNS INTO VIRUSES AND YEAST INTO MUSIC. BY PAUL DALING



Plus

THE SOON-TO-BE MAYORAL ALSO-RANS WORTH A CLOSER LOOK

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

BOY HOWDY did it get exciting 'round these parts last week! Our Public Newsroom with City Bureau kicked off last Thursday with a toast in our new Bronzeville office—which then led to some of the smartest discussions I've had in this city about how we can hold public office-seekers publicly accountable. I don't mean "we" the press, the royal/generic we that might allow me to pass off platitudes about what should be done, in general, without ever really doing them. I mean we, the *Reader*. Your alternative newsweekly. The newspaper that asked you to come in and help us develop piercing questions to bring to our mayoral and aldermanic candidates. The paper that is using those questions to shape our coverage—coverage you will later read. And perhaps use to guide your decisions in the voting booth. Whereupon maybe we will have some elected officials in office ready to do some of the hard work that it will

take to make Chicago everything it can be. Certainly, we here at the *Reader* are ready to ask the hard questions whenever that process falters.

When I say "your alternative newsweekly," I mean it: Literally yours! It is free, and you can have one. It is one of the very few alternative newsweeklies that remain in the country, and it is right here in Chicago. Some of you write for us, illustrate, take photographs, or contribute in other ways. With City Bureau's help, we asked those of you who don't to come in and help shape our coverage. And now, folks are pitching in to our fund-raiser, too.

It's the first time the *Reader's* ever done anything like this, and we didn't know what to expect. But watching over 700 donors (at press time) drop a buck (or more) in our coffers to ensure we can continue asking hard questions of those who

seek office has been exhilarating. Thank you! (We'll say that a lot in the coming days.)

In this issue, we started posing some of those hard questions right away—to folks who may never even make it onto the ballot. In a smart piece by our own Maya Dukmasova, we track down a few mayoral hopefuls unlikely to survive the petition challenge—but who raise issues vital to the city's future.

We've got plenty of other great stuff in the issue, of course, and some news: it's our last issue with creative director Vince Cerasani, the man who's kept our covers bold and eye-catching over the last year. He'll be leaving to pursue other projects, and we wish him the best of luck. It's also our first issue with print managing editor Sujay Kumar, who brings a background in cultural and investigative reportage to your alternative newsweekly. —**ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE**

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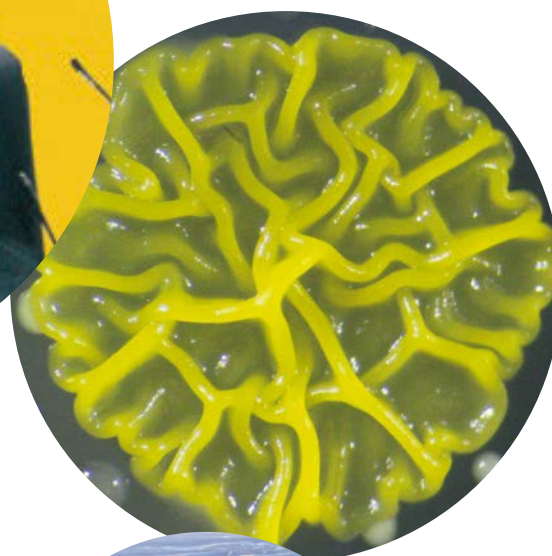


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CITY LIFE

STREET VIEW

Waste not

A teenager sports high fashion on a low budget.



ISA GIALLORENZO

FIND HUNDREDS OF READER-RECOMMENDED RESTAURANTS

EXCLUSIVE VIDEO FEATURES AND SIGN UP FOR WEEKLY NEWS

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READER

"I FEEL LIKE if I'm not disgusted with what I wore a year ago, then I'm not doing my job," says high school senior Zoe Axelrod, who tries to err on the side of boldness. "If it isn't going to make a statement, then it's not worth wearing. Not every look I put together is 'good,' but it'll certainly get your attention." She wasn't always such a fashion enthusiast, though; up until around her freshman year, Axelrod favored basic items such as low-rise leggings and graphic tees. Her sartorial turning point came when she started following fashion bloggers on Instagram and YouTube. "My current favorites are Beth Jones of B. Jones Style, Tara Chandra, and Allison of Titi Alli. They all give me ideas of outfits to put together, but ultimately, my clothes are what inspire me," says the avid thrifter, whose personal style has been developed through "a lot of trial and error." On the day she was photographed, she ended up missing her school bus because she couldn't figure out what to layer under her olive button-down—an XL pajama top she found at a thrift store in Arlington Heights, her hometown. "The fabric was so beautiful I couldn't pass it by," she says. The 17-year-old ended up pairing her esteemed shirt with a turtleneck she got on sale at Target a couple of years ago, vintage frames that used to belong to her mom, earrings handed down from her grandma, a belt that used to be a Gryffindor tie from a Hermione costume, and a pair of ASOS platforms, her "pride and glory," thrifted at the Savers in Schaumburg for eight bucks. Axelrod highly recommends that store. "They have the biggest and most organized kids section, which is where I get most of my funky pieces," she enthuses. The precocious and frugal style savant has another shopping tip: "If you want to save time, skim the aisles for the colors you think your closet needs more of." —ISA GIALLORENZO

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CITY LIFE



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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center

A good place to warm up in the winter

By **ANNE ELIZABETH MOORE**

It had been over ten years since I'd visited this institution devoted to celebrating and promoting Afro-Latin arts and culture in Chicago. So when I wandered into the Hermosa space to vote last month at an ungodly early hour and was immediately greeted by live music and center volunteers there just to hang out, I was delighted to be flooded with memories of visits to a previous location during my first days in the city nearly three decades back. Changes in location and the passage of time haven't chipped away at the vibrant sense of engagement on offer at the Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center (SRBCC).

Founded the same year as the *Reader*—1971—and named in honor of the Puerto Rican patriot and member of a secret abolitionist society that freed slave children under Spanish rule, the center offers percussion classes, live music and art events, and community workshops. It partners with

DJ collective Soulphonetics will spin Afro-Caribbean music and local vendors will have wares available for sale. (Reserve tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/santisimo-sancocho-tickets-53020563934>)

After School Matters to provide paid apprenticeships to young adults to learn traditional Puerto Rican bomba, Afro-Caribbean jazz, and music video production. In recent years the SRBCC has focused on supporting the people of Puerto Rico in the wake of hurricanes Irma and María as a member organization of the Puerto Rican Agenda, which sent two planes full of immediately needed items to Puerto Rico and funded grants in 30 municipalities for projects focusing on sustainable agriculture, health, solar energy, clean water, and more.

Heads up: on Sunday, December 16, a sancocho tasting from 5 to 9 PM will make for a great introduction to the center if a chilly day gives you a hankering for Caribbean stew. 

 **@superanne**

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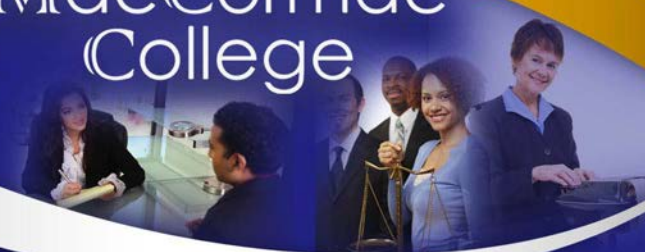


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TRANSPORTATION

Snow patrol

Streets and San does a great job of clearing the roads—thanks to Chicago-style politics.

By JOHN GREENFIELD



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Ever since Mayor Michael Bilandic lost reelection to Jane Byrne after the great blizzard of 1979 paralyzed Chicago, snowplowing has been a highly political matter in our city.

Richard M. Daley had announced his intention to step down months before the 2011 Snowpocalypse hit in early February. Had he been running again, outrage over the hundreds of half-buried cars and buses that were stuck on Lake Shore Drive for more than 24 hours during that weather event would have been a major problem for him in the election, which took place later that month.

The failure to make Chicago's snowplows run on time is political suicide nowadays, and as a consequence the city generally does a great, if somewhat obsessive, job of clearing major roads for bus passengers and car drivers. (Not so much for winter bike riders—cyclists have complained that the city's curbside protected bike lanes, which are plowed by the Chicago Department of Transportation, are often impassable for several days after a snowfall.)

For example, when a storm dumped 8.3 inches on Chicago on the morning of November 26, 1,254 flights were grounded at O'Hare and all Metra commuter rail lines saw delays. But commuters reported that the city's arterials were in good shape for buses and motorists just a few hours into the workday.

Here at the *Reader* we were curious about exactly how the city manages to clear the major streets so efficiently after a major snow event. So I checked in with Commissioner John Tully of the Department of Streets and Sanitation, which spearheads plowing efforts on a route system of more than 9,400 lane

miles, to get the skinny. Tully started with the department 24 years ago and moved up the ranks until he made department chief a year ago.

Joining us for the conversation were deputy commissioners Cole Stallard and Ray Laureano. As you might expect of seasoned Streets and San workers, all three men talked with a textbook "Bill Swerski's Superfans"-style Northern Cities Vowel Shift.

According to Tully, preparation for a storm like last month's starts around July, when reps from Streets and San meet with their counterparts at sister agencies, including the departments of Fleet and Facility Management (F2M), Water, and Transportation, as well as the city's Office of Emergency Management and Communications, to strategize.

The city classifies weather events of varying levels of severity by "phases," and responds with a predetermined number of plows and salt spreaders, Stallard said. He added that determining the phase of a storm isn't based on hard-and-fast rules, but rather it's a more qualitative judgement that weighs factors like temperature, precipitation level, and wind speed.

During a mild Phase I event, such as the light snowfall that occurred two days after last month's major storm, 75 to 100 full-sized trucks are dispatched to make sure bridges and overpasses (which freeze and collect snow before surface streets), arterials, and Lake Shore Drive all stay clear.

The early-morning November 26 storm was initially pegged as a Phase II event based on weather forecasts the evening prior, so Streets and San responded by sending out the predetermined 211 trucks. (In addition

to tracking storms via Doppler radar and checking in with meteorologists, sensors embedded in roads near eleven Chicago bridges provide data on ground and air temperatures in key locations.)

Later that evening, when more severe weather was predicted, the storm was upgraded to Phase III, with 287 large trucks put on the street, plus 26 pickup trucks for plowing narrow side streets. During more intense Phase IV storms, workers from F2M, Water, and Transportation pitch in with plowing efforts. "It's an all-hands-on-deck situation," Stallard said.

A Phase V event—the type of severe snowmageddon that has occurred only a few times in the past 20 years, including the 2011 blizzard and major storms in 1999 and 2014—forces the city to hire private contractors for reinforcements.

Streets and San mostly uses old-fashioned sodium chloride road salt. During the polar vortex of early 2014, the region's salt shortages and price spikes were made worse by frozen waterways that blocked shipments. But Tully said the city later locked in a multiyear price for salt and is getting more deliveries by rail nowadays.

The department also keeps roughly 100,000 gallons of a more environmentally friendly brine-and-beet-juice cocktail on hand to spray on bridges and overpasses. This helps prevent freezing during late fall and early spring, when temperatures often hover around 32 degrees.

Streets and San leads the city's responses to major storms from "Snow Command" at OEMC's headquarters, 1411 West Madison. "Each department has a desk, so instead of

having to make phone calls to coordinate, [staffers are] sitting right there," Tully said.

For a plow driver's eye view, he referred me to Laureano, who worked on snow clearance for 20 years. "I call him 'Glum,' if you remember *Gulliver's Travels*," Tully said, referring to the pessimistic Lilliputian from the Jonathan Swift novel. "I'm a positive person, but he always gives me the worst-case scenario for the storm, so I have both ends of it."

Contrary to his nickname, Laureano spoke glowingly of the job. "As a snowplow driver, there's a sense of accomplishment when you see a street where people just can't get through, and when you're done traffic is flowing like nothing happened."

However, Tully admitted that the 2011 LSD debacle was not his department's finest hour. "It was a combination of heavy snow and an accordion bus that got stuck, blocking two lanes." He added that the problem was exacerbated because the walls between the northbound and southbound lanes prevented the removal of stalled vehicles; nowadays the barriers are removable.

Also embarrassing for Streets and San was a 2015 *Chicago Sun-Times* investigation of the city's Plow Tracker data, generated by GPS devices installed on snow trucks, that found that the block where powerful southwest side alderman Ed Burke lives was cleared multiple times after a heavy snowfall, while nearby streets resembled arctic tundra. (On November 29, FBI agents conducted a presumably unrelated raid on Burke's offices, but as of press time no charges had been filed.)

"I don't think the whole story's been told," Tully said, referring to the plowing scandal. He noted that in recent years a new high school and elementary school opened a few blocks east of Burke's house on 51st Street, and argued that plow drivers may have been using the street as a turnaround. "I don't think we had anything to hide there."

But Tully acknowledged that snowplowing—or, in Bilandic's case, the lack of it—has political ramifications. "Residents hold their elected officials accountable," he said. "Most of the time it's for things that inconvenience them. . . . But I think that if [Streets and San workers] worry about public safety, which is our main concern, the rest will take care of itself." ■

John Greenfield edits the transportation news website [Streetsblog Chicago](http://StreetsblogChicago.com).
 @greenfieldjohn



POLITICS

Celebrating the successful teachers' strike

City Council hates taking from the schools and giving to the rich—but sometimes they do it anyway.

By BEN JORAVSKY

As I watched jubilant teachers, wearing union red, from the Acero charter school network celebrate the new contract they'd won after a four-day strike, I had a flashback to the way things used to be.

The Chicago Teachers Union was in the midst of its 2012 strike, which had shuttered all the public schools in town. Juan Rangel, then the head of the UNO charter network—the predecessor to Acero—stood on a downtown street corner and called on parents upset at CTU to send their kids to his charter schools.

After all, his teachers knew enough not to go on strike.

Man, have things changed—huh, Juan?

Wait, wait, as long as I'm reminiscing about changes since the bad old days, remember how recently elected Mayor Rahm, marching into town like Napoleon, took Karen Lewis out for dinner and told her how it's gonna be with the schools?

With f-bombs flying, he told her that he was going to make teachers work more for less. And he was closing public schools and replacing them with charters and that she'd better get her members to fall in line, whether they liked it or not.

When Lewis pointed out that more hours in the classroom without resources to put the time to good use was little more than babysitting, Rahm told her—who cares, most of these kids won't amount to anything anyway.

Well, Karen says he said that. Rahm swears up and down that he didn't. But then he also swears he never watched the Laquan McDonald tape. So you decide who's telling the truth in that Karen/Rahm dispute, Chicago.

And it wasn't just Karen Lewis who got marching orders from Rahm back then. In 2011, Rahm commanded Alderman Nick Sposato to roll over and support a zoning change for an UNO charter school in his north-west-side ward.

When Sposato protested, Rahm got zoning committee chair Alderman Danny Solis to rough up the rookie alderman. "It's almost an embarrassment that an alderman would say no to children and to good education in this city," Solis declared.

So much for aldermanic prerogative on things like zoning and development.

And so it went for those first few years of Rahm's rule. He closed clinics and schools and opened nonunion charters. He took property taxes from the schools and gave them to developers to build in upscale neighborhoods, like the West Loop and the South Loop.

So, yes, I'm very happy to report that things have changed in many ways around here.

Rangel stepped down long ago after he got entangled in a contracting scandal. You don't hear Mayor Rahm singing his praises anymore, like in the old days. In fact, UNO changed its name to Acero in part to distance itself from the old boss.

Rahm's appointees at the Board of Education recently voted not to approve three new charters, as they struggle to figure out how to fund the schools they already have.

And of course Rahm's not running for reelection, in part because he apparently realized his Republican-lite policies are so unpopular that he can't win, even with all the millions in his campaign war chest.

The front-runner to replace him—Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle—won CTU's endorsement by agreeing to a four-year freeze on new charters and to spend TIF reserves on the public schools.

You know, Karen Lewis never got to run

against Rahm in 2015 because she got sick. But in many ways, it's like she won.

OK, I better stop before I get too cocky.

After all, Rahm's damage has already been done. Eight years of closing schools and subsidizing development in gentrifying neighborhoods has forced poor and working-class people out of Chicago.

Rahm and his allies got upset when Chris Kennedy opined that the mayor's planning policies were intended to drive black people out of town. But that's what's happened, whether the mayor was planning it or not.

Also, we still have a mayoral election ahead of us. And I'm sure one of those candidates will pick up Rahm's prodevelopment agenda, if only to win endorsements from the *Tribune* and *Crain's*.

To that point, I can smell the grease on the wheels as Mayor Rahm prepares to ram the Lincoln Yards TIF deal through City Council before he leaves office.

Remember how Tax Increment Financing works: the mayor raises your property taxes in the name of funding things like schools and then diverts your tax dollars from the schools to a slush fund that he controls. Rahm wants to spend upward of \$1 billion on the Lincoln Yards project, located in a rapidly gentrifying north-side neighborhood.

So far, Amara Enyia is the only mayoral candidate who says she unequivocally opposes the Lincoln Yards TIF handout.

In fact, Enyia says she'd show up to a City Council meeting, if or when it meets to approve a Lincoln Yards handout, to demand the aldermen vote no. And she might bring her ally, Chance the Rapper, with her.

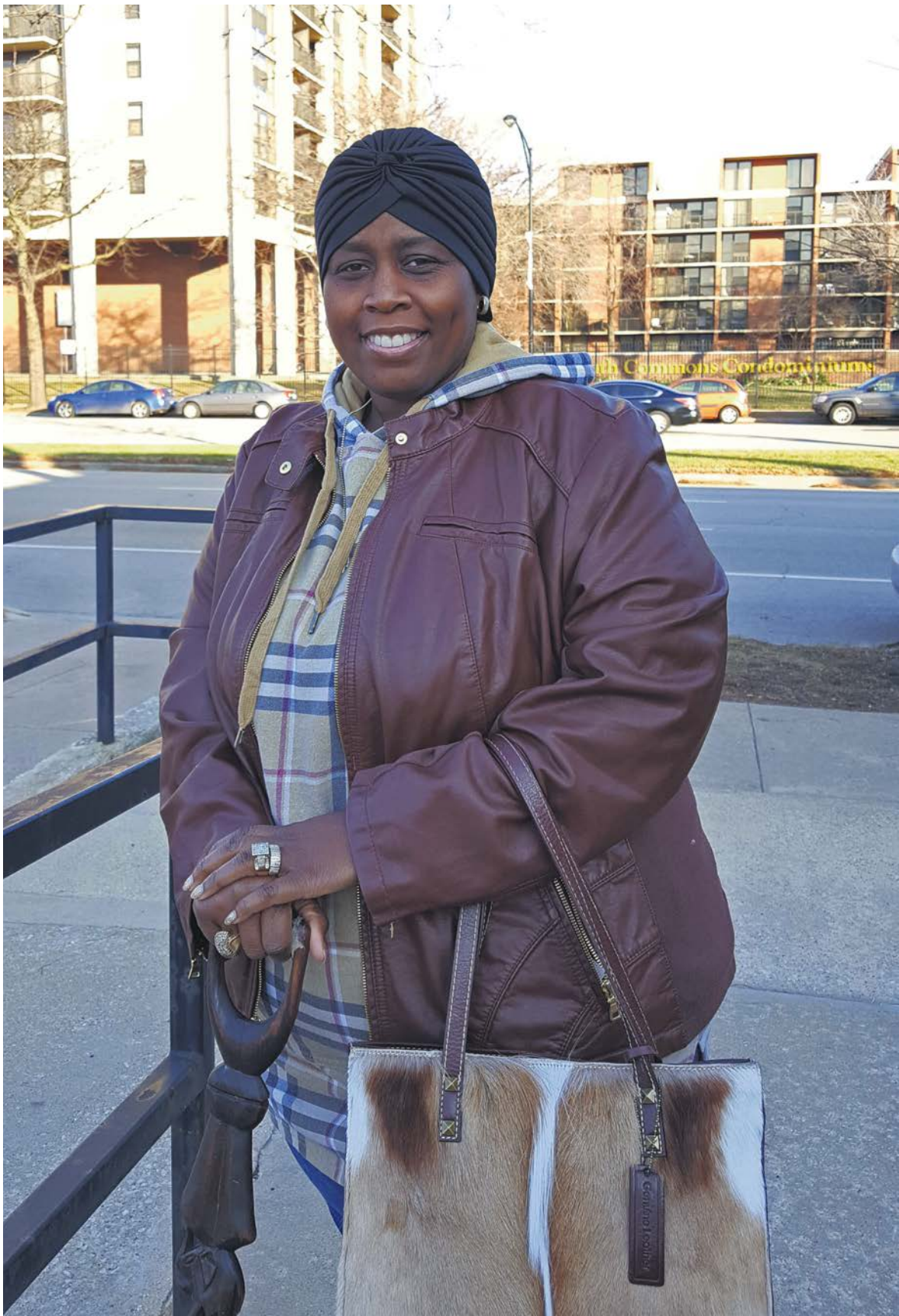
The last time Chance showed up to oppose a TIF deal was last year, when the City Council was considering the \$95 million police academy. The aldermen politely listened to Chance voice his opposition and then basically gave him and his allies the middle finger, bowing to the mayor's wishes and voting 47-2 to fund the deal.

Only aldermen Rick Munoz and Carlos Ramirez-Rosa voted no.

That's the thing about aldermen in this town. They know it's wrong to take from the schools and give to the rich. But they're too afraid to say no to the mayor. So they bow to his wishes and hope the rest of us aren't paying attention.

So, while it's good to see Acero's teachers celebrating their new contract, this fight is far from over. **A**

@BennyJShow



POLITICS

Mayor Who?

There's more than funky names to the overlooked mayoral hopefuls.

By MAYA DUKMASOVA

With 21 candidates vying to be the next mayor of Chicago, hearings on challenges to their nominating petition signatures and other paperwork began this week at the Chicago Board of Elections. The agency will issue its decisions on the challenges by Christmas. Many of the candidates will likely not be able to prove that they have the 12,500 valid signatures from registered Chicago voters necessary for making the ballot.

It is with this round of disqualifications looming that the *Reader* decided to take a closer look at the lower profile candidates who've been written off by much of the media as not "serious" or "viable." It's possible, even likely, that most of them won't be on the February ballot, but that says little about the viability of their ideas or the seriousness of their commitment to the city. As we met with and interviewed the Chicagoans who dream most vividly of taking up the city's highest office, it became clear that, if nothing else, most of them are acutely aware of the problems faced by ordinary people here. They may not have the campaign funds, party backing, or name-recognition needed to win this election, but they also don't stink of the bullshit

Catherine Brown
D'Tycoon SUE KWONG

that tends to envelop the “viable” candidates who calculate statements to sound as inoffensive as possible while withholding most actionable opinions and commitments.

You may be surprised to learn that the candidate who submitted the most petition signatures to the Board of Elections wasn’t Toni Preckwinkle (60,000), Garry McCarthy (55,000), or Amara Enyia (62,000)—it was south-side pastor and life coach Catherine Brown D’Tycoon. Her 88,000 signatures were submitted in 17 binders. Last week, objections were filed on the grounds that hundreds of her petition pages were photocopied and that she didn’t meet the required binding standards, among other paperwork errors. But when she paid a visit to the *Reader* offices, she was confident her records would withstand scrutiny and that she’d make it onto the ballot.

Brown D’Tycoon, 44, was delivered for the interview in a black Cadillac Escalade by her assistant and campaign aide Davar Jones. She wore a black turban and Burberry-patterned hoodie, walking gingerly with a hand-carved wooden cane. As we sat down to chat, she wasted no time addressing the origins of her unusual name. The “D” stands in for “the” and a tycoon is a “wealthy and powerful business leader,” she said. It’s supposed to be aspirational but also evokes her family’s history of business ownership; she says God told her to take on this name as she was deep in prayer one day about a decade ago.

“As a young girl in eighth grade I used to get teased and called a *raccoon* because I had dark rings around my eyes,” she went on to say. “And I know black people have been called ‘coons’ for a long time as well. So in my prayer time God gave me that name and He said ‘Yeah you’re indeed a ‘coon but you’re a tycoon.’”

Brown D’Tycoon believes in “speaking things as though it was already so.” It’s why she already presents herself as “Mayor Tycoon” on her business cards. She says her confidence in this election bid is rooted in her faith.

This isn’t her first attempt at elected office; in 2011 she ran for 21st Ward alderman but was bounced off the ballot. She’d filed 389 signatures—107 more than was needed, but challenges held up against 172 of them, and she ultimately didn’t have enough. Knowing the importance of the signatures, this time around she says she enlisted the help of friends, family, and congregants at Kingdom

Life Center, where she’s a pastor, to collect far and wide. She plans to start campaigning in earnest and speaking more to the media only after she knows for sure she’s on the ballot.

In addition to her pastoral duties, Brown D’Tycoon is active with several community organizations, including Action Now and the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. She’s also served on the Local School Council at Garrett Morgan Elementary School in Auburn Gresham, which was one of the 49 schools shuttered by CPS in 2013. She says she even tried to buy the building, just down the block from her childhood home, to reopen a school there, but the deal never went anywhere. She says she was active for a long time with the Chicago Police Department’s sixth district CAPS. But her attitude toward the police changed radically in May of 2013.

Driving into the alley behind her home one evening, Brown D’Tycoon encountered a CPD squad car and Officer Michelle Morsi Murphy, who she says immediately cursed her out. The incident quickly escalated into a fender bender, officers beating her, and charges of attempted murder, reckless conduct, and a slew of other crimes. Three years later, the case became a widely reported story of police misconduct, after CBS 2 uncovered dashcam video showing cops ramming their vehicle

“He said all you gotta do is get a paper and get people to sign it.”

—Conrien Hykes Clark

into Brown D’Tycoon’s retreating car, pepper spraying her, beating her, and tearing her clothes off. Morsi Murphy claimed Brown D’Tycoon had dragged her from her car as she backed out of the alley behind her house—an allegation that was never proved in court. Brown D’Tycoon ultimately sued the cops and recently won a \$1.1 million settlement. She was convicted of misdemeanor reckless conduct, but the attempted murder charges were dropped.

“I got arrested and fought for my life almost three years,” she says, and it made her reevaluate how she saw the neighborhood youth who’d long told her of unfair treatment by CPD.

“For years I really thought it was the young men that were out here being disrespectful or reckless,” she says. “There was a time I had a sincere, deep compassion for the police because they have such a tough job to do. But when I went into this situation it opened my eyes.” She says reforming CPD and ending police brutality would be at the top of her agenda as mayor.

“I know that the Chicago police have been crooked for years, it’s going to take a lot to make a change,” Brown D’Tycoon says. “But the first thing they need to know is that you have to have total respect for the people paying you. We can no longer allow the ➔



Brown D’Tycoon already presents herself as “Mayor Tycoon.” COURTESY CATHERINE BROWN D’TYCOON

continued from 9

police to neglect and disrespect when the car clearly says we're here to serve and protect. . . . We no longer need beast officers, we need peace officers."

She was particularly disappointed that officers who were present and saw what had happened between her and Morsi Murphy didn't speak up to tell the truth. "It's hard to say that all cops are bad because I know that's not true, but the majority are, in my opinion," she says. "I was looking at 30-plus years in jail, and that's not right. To lose my children for a made-up lie? Are you kidding me?"

In addition to police reform, Brown D'Tycoon wants to open up the Section 8 housing voucher waiting list to expand affordable housing options; start a city-sponsored mentorship and life coaching program for young black men; provide more funding to nonprofits and churches already working to alleviate poverty in the city; improve the quality of CPS school lunches so they're more nutritious, delicious, and promote an appreciation for home-cooked meals; restart the CeaseFire program for gang violence prevention; and bring a Moses-themed amusement park to Chicago she'd call the "Promised Land." She also supports creating an elected school board.

Brown D'Tycoon adds that she'd push to reform the onerous rules governing who can get on the ballot to run for local office, so it wouldn't just be rich people who have a chance to compete. She thinks the mayor should be a person familiar to regular people, who spends time in the neighborhoods and takes everyone into consideration, even criminals and drug addicts, "to learn what it is that people need."

More than a year ago, her childhood home on Kerfoot Avenue burned and Brown D'Tycoon was forced to relocate. Still, she thinks of the house as home and lists the address on her official paperwork. "The plan is to get the house redone eventually," she says. "If God allows me to become mayor I would make that an office for me as mayor." If she doesn't win, Brown D'Tycoon says, she'll continue her community work.

Brown D'Tycoon isn't the only hopeful who attributes her campaign to divine inspiration. Eighty-seven-year-old Roseland resident Conrien Hykes Clark has attracted some attention with her attempt to get on the ballot. Clark also says she received word from God that she should run for mayor.

"I believe in speaking things as though it was already so."

*—Catherine Brown
D'Tycoon*

Clark turned in just 53 petition signatures. The whole process was very new for her, she explained when reached by phone last week after she had finished volunteering at Haines Elementary School in Chinatown. "I've never ran for mayor or alderman or nothing like that, I never had a public job like that," she said. "I would have to learn just like you learn anything else."

Getting off the bus at 35th and Halsted one day, she was asked to sign a petition by another candidate running for mayor—a white man whose name she says she doesn't remember, though given the location perhaps it was John Kozlar, another under-the-radar candidate and Bridgeport native. Clark says she asked him how someone can run, and "he said all you gotta do is get a paper and get people to sign it."

Clark says her priority in office would be to deal with the drug problem in the city. "It's a hurting thing in my neighborhood," she says. "You watch the news, you know about the killing and stuff that's going on." She doesn't begrudge Rahm Emanuel or other current city or police leaders for not doing enough about the problem, though. "I think they're doing all they can, all they know to do," she says.

"Grandma Clark," as the third graders at Haines call her, moved to Chicago from Mississippi in 1952. She's seen a lot of mayors come and go. For her money, "Old Man

Daley" was the best mayor this city ever saw. "He didn't talk a lot, he said a few words and that was it. I liked that part about him," she says. "I think he did good." So far, she added, she hasn't heard anything from her competitors that would prompt her to vote for any of them.

Even if she doesn't get on the ballot or win, Clark has no plans to sit around doing nothing. She says she'd keep volunteering at the school four days a week, which requires her to spend three hours commuting to and from home. Maybe she'll find other work to keep herself occupied too.

This commitment to keep serving fellow citizens regardless of the election outcome was also expressed by CPD officer Roger L. Washington. He filed 13,000 signatures and is frustrated by the challenges to his candidacy, which have reportedly come from businessman and perennial mayoral hopeful Willie Wilson's campaign. Washington says Wilson targeted him, activist Ja'mal Green, and state representative La Shawn Ford with challenges because "he wants to be the only black man in the race."

Washington, 46, says the absurdly high number of signatures required to get on the ballot and the petition challenge process undermines democracy. (Los Angeles, for example, requires just 500 signatures to run for mayor; New York asks for 3,750). "If you take the time out and get through the process and get people to sign and make your best effort, I believe you should be let on the ballot," he says. "All 21 candidates had a vision they're trying to do, and I believe no one should be able to stop that dream by challenging—that's selfish and disrespectful."

Like Brown D'Tycoon, Washington is also a pastor and has run for alderman before. He made the ballot in the 24th Ward in the 2015 election but lost to Michael Scott Jr. He's also concerned with crime in Chicago, though as a police officer he views CPD as integral to combating the gun violence in the city. "I promise you 90 percent of crime would stop," he boldly asserts without getting into specifics when asked what he'd accomplish as mayor. He says that, because he knows the streets well and understands police-community relations, he'd be able to rebuild confidence in law enforcement and unity throughout the city.

When asked whether his 16 misconduct allegations since joining the force in 1999 would be a barrier to building trust with the community, Washington says he didn't think

anyone would hold those against him. "You'd do me a favor if you showed me a police officer that hasn't been complained against," he says. "It's all about the outcome of the complaint." Four of the complaints filed against him have been sustained over the years, leading to suspensions as long as 180 days. Washington says complaints go hand in hand with disrupting people's criminal activity. "When your crime has been stopped, you want to make it seem like the police officer was wrong," he says. CPD records show Washington has also received 15 honorable mentions for his service.

Washington says he's inspired by the unifying spirit Mayor Harold Washington brought to City Hall. "That's what Chicago is reaching for right now—they want transparency, someone they can trust without the machine being involved," he says. "That's why I see Chicago leaning towards me once all the smoke clears."

In addition to tackling crime, Washington says economic development, improving public schools, and increasing affordable housing are his top priorities. He wants to do something to curb the predatory contract-for-deed home sales he sees in his North Lawndale neighborhood and says he supports the movement to repeal the state ban on rent control and establish local rent regulation. "The rent control idea is awesome," he says. "I want to be a part of that to make sure that when these land-

"... the first thing [the police] need to know is that you have to have total respect for the people paying you."

*—Catherine Brown
D'Tycoon*

📷 COURTESY ROGER L. WASHINGTON



“If you take the time out and get through the process and get people to sign and make your best effort, I believe you should be let on the ballot.”

—Roger L. Washington

lords open up these leases to these renters they don’t give them a crappy contract. If the economy hasn’t changed—if the salary hasn’t changed—then the rent shouldn’t change.”

Washington also wants to reform city ticketing practices that are disproportionately punitive toward African-Americans and have been shown by ProPublica Illinois to be driving record numbers of bankruptcy filings in Chicago. Washington himself has filed for bankruptcy several times in the past, largely due to onerous city ticket debt racked up by family members who drove cars registered to his name, he says.

The *Reader* tried to interview candidate Sandra L. Mallory, 57, a West Englewood resident who filed 15,000 signatures and hasn’t been challenged. Her daughter answered the phone and said Mallory “is not interested in all this publicity or you all scrutinizing her, she only cares about the citizens.” She did, however, share her mother’s campaign website—mallory2019.org—which makes it clear that the candidate’s main concern is Chicago’s homelessness problem. Mallory, an army veteran and social worker, writes on the site that to be a successful mayor “it will take the good honest counsel of many Chicagoans to

help mend, repair, heal, and sustain our city for the long haul.”

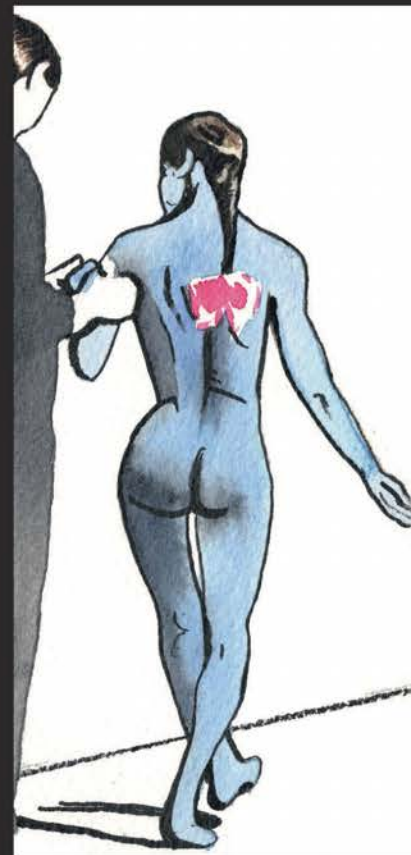
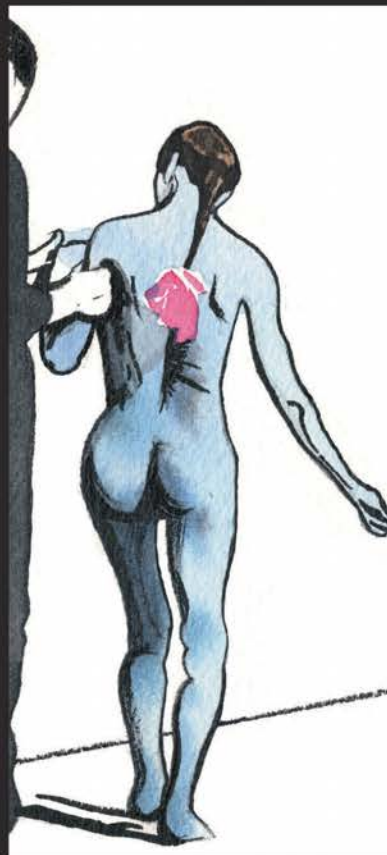
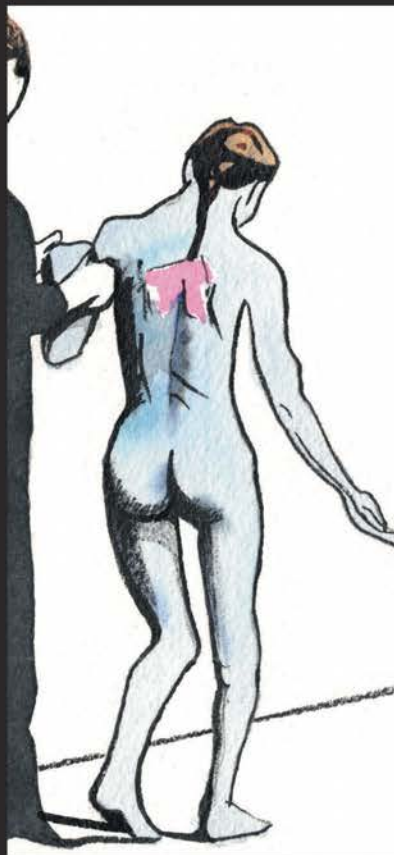
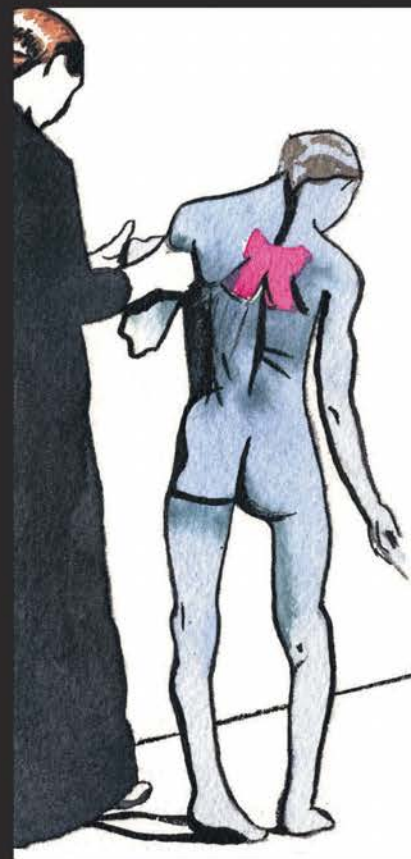
Our last call for this story was to Richard Mayers, 47, a west-side native who filed simultaneously to run for mayor, treasurer, clerk, and alderman of the 23rd Ward. He didn’t file any signatures and is being challenged. Mayers summarized his platform. He wants to see toll booths on North Lake Shore Drive and the Kennedy Expressway to discourage traffic and to lower the costs of the Chicago Skyway tolls. He also wants to see the cost of city parking stickers reduced in lower income wards. It wasn’t clear whether this was motivated by an interest in social justice or progressive taxation, as he added that he wants to see a return of restrictive covenants to prevent black people from buying homes, thereby creating “white island” neighborhoods in predominantly black south- and west-side communities.

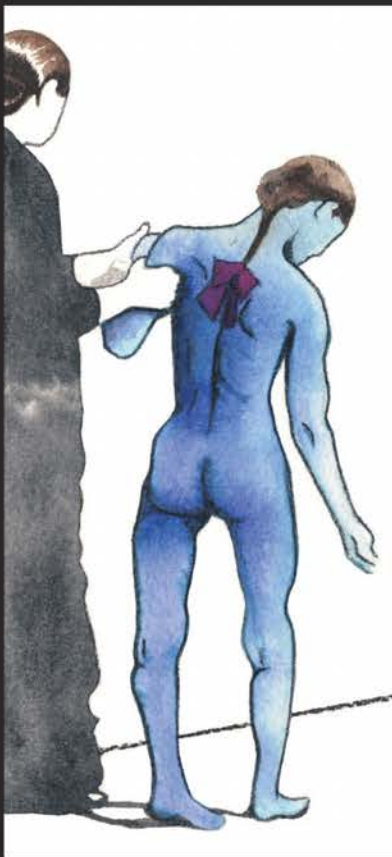
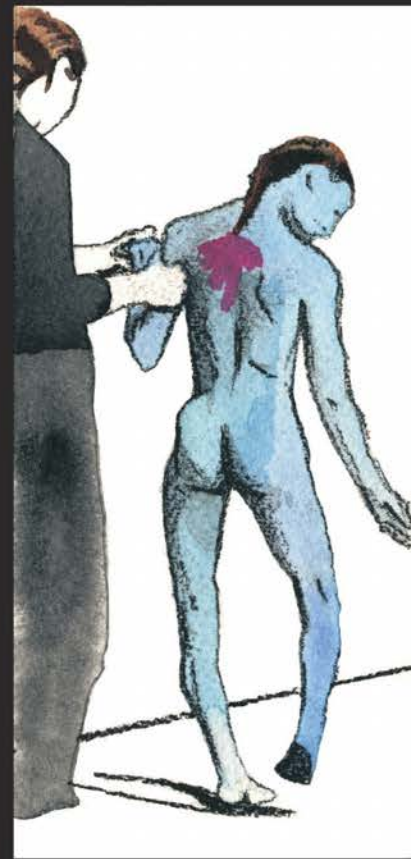
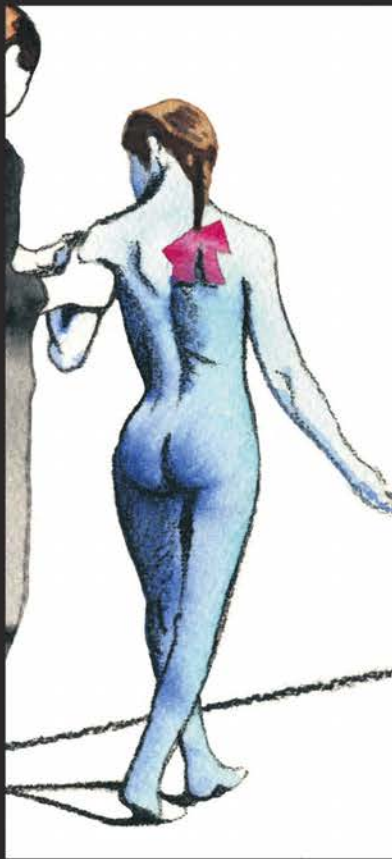
Whatever one might think of these candidates’ ideas, the fact is that it’s not their ideas that risk keeping them out of the mayoral election. Rather, it’s the city’s onerous qualification requirements that prevent regular people from joining the ranks of mayoral hopefuls and competing with the candidates everyone assumes to be the only options. The front-runners are unlikely to advocate for anything as blatantly offensive as restrictive covenants or take a stand on something as controversial as rent control, but neither are they people who can claim to have intimate first-hand experience with displacement and homelessness, the closure of public schools in their neighborhoods, the physical and psychological wounds of getting beat up by cops, hunger, predatory lending, the tediously long commutes wrought by infrastructural inequality, and the burden of insurmountable debt. What they have instead are the credentials and connections most of us associate with credibility, and the money to make their dreams come true. Could it be that the unprecedented number of candidates attempting to enter the race this year is a sign of the city rejecting these as the essential ingredients of leadership? Catherine Brown D’Tycoon certainly thinks so.

“I believe the ping-pong game of politics has come to an end in Chicago and power will no longer be the ball,” she says. “God is not pleased with how the city’s been run.” 📍

🐦 @mdoukmas

WOMAN with
Multiple Sclerosis,
WALKING (ANNA MAY
KEISLER) 1887
23 YEARS OLD
 THIS WOMAN WAS A
 PATIENT AT BLOCKLEY
 HOSPITAL FOR THE
 POOR* AND IS
 ATTENDED BY A
 NURSE FROM THE
 HOSPITAL.
 COMIC BY WOMAN WITH
 MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS,
 DRAWING (ANNELI S.
 HENRIKSSON) 2018
 * 27 YEARS OLD
 * LATER KNOWN AS
 GENERAL PHILADELPHIA HOSPITAL







Luglug noodles
SANDY NOTO



Bayan lechon SANDY NOTO

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Filipino Meets Cuban at Bayan Ko

A snug Ravenswood mom and pop with postcolonial synergy

By **MIKE SULA**

The song Bayan Ko (“My Country”) is a wistful Filipino anthem, about a beautiful land suffering (and hopefully prevailing) under colonization. On the other side of the planet, Cuba has a less oblique, more strident song, La Bayamesa, about kicking Spanish ass in the country’s decades-long wars fought for independence.

It says so much about the importance of food that a restaurant—and at its heart a marriage—can clarify the two nations’ commonalities:

island cultures, colonized and enslaved by Spaniards—and later, to certain degrees, Americans—and both presently suffering under newer but unrelated forms of dictatorship.

That’s the conceit behind a new Ravenswood restaurant from chef Lawrence Letrero and, in the front of the house, Raquel Quadreny, children of first-generation immigrants, Filipino and Cuban, respectively. The menu features the cuisines of both countries, drawing on the foods the two grew up on, in some cases blending and innovating on them.

There are a healthy number of restaurants around town where you might have eaten Letrero’s food, most recently at the Waldorf Astoria, but also Sable, Untitled, and the late Perennial, Karyn’s on Green, the Refinery, and the ill-fated Tribute. He also worked a stage at Thomas Keller’s Per Se in Manhattan, but nothing in that varied career comes close to the highly personal yet cheffy interpretation of soulful granny food at play in this storefront adjacent to the Brown Line, a snug space that is still unrepresented by a website but doesn’t

seem to have much trouble filling its 30 seats night after night.

The best, most alluring specimen of this is Letrero’s interpretation of *pancit luglug*, sometimes known as *pancit palabok*, an everyday street snack of rice noodles in a shrimpy annatto-stained sauce, dressed with chicharrones and slices of hard-boiled egg. Letrero subs saffron for the rusty coloring, jiggly scallops for shrimp, and a raw yolk, which along with silky uni contributes an outrageous sumptuousness to what—at \$24—amounts to the crown jewel of his menu.

It’s well worth it though, especially since much of the rest of the menu comprises small portions at easier pricing, making an outing here an inevitable tour of many of the greatest hits of both cuisines. That’s not to say there aren’t dishes that match the luglug’s richness—or far outstrip its assertiveness. Oxtail *kare kare* is a thick, meaty peanut-based curry with long beans, served with a side of intensely salty, funky *bagoong alamang*, or fermented shrimp paste. *Lechon kawali* is scored and



Lumpia shanghai 📷 SANDY NOTO

crackly-skinned fried pork belly, served with the iconic liver-based Mang Tomas sauce, the fatty understory and organic minerality of each cut by sweet and tangy achara, a pickled green papaya slaw. An uncharacteristically chubby cubano stuffed with chopped roast pork shoulder oozes with ropes of gooey Swiss cheese. Even the seemingly virtuous *pinakbet*, a ratatouille of eggplant, kabocha, squash, long beans, and okra, murmurs darkly with bitter melon and bagoong.

In the fried snack department, lumpia, crisp cigar-sized egg rolls, jacket a surprisingly juicy pork interior along with Letrero's mother's garlic-soy-vinegar sauce. Crackling rice flour-battered chicken wings are treated with

a sticky sweet glaze of soy, caramel, and vinegar that approximates the typical pinoy adobo braise, while cultures collide with smoked ham hock croqueta "tots," paired with aioli spiked with Jufran, the sweet banana ketchup improvised during a World War II tomato shortage. A more straightforward rendition of *ropa vieja* subs the more tender shredded beef brisket for the typical flank steak.

Desserts feature a simple but wondrous flan glistening with bitter salted caramel, made extra dense with extra egg yolks in line with both the Cuban and Filipino style; and a scaled-back take on the riotous sundae *halo halo*, focused on red bean, jellied coconut, and flan crowned with a royal purple scoop of ube

ice cream that echoes the floral mural painted by graffiti artist Revise CMW, aka Chef Won Kim of Bridgeport's Kimski, another restaurant that marries two superficially disparate but complementary cuisines.

Filipino food is slightly more dominant than the Cuban at Bayan Ko, but while Letrero pulls no punches in the kitchen, Quadreny, herself a service industry vet, runs the front of the house shimmering with warmth. Together they embody everything that's right about a literal mom and pop, one that happens to traffic in foods worlds apart but perfectly at home with one another. 📷

🐦 @MikeSula



El cubano sandwich
📷 SANDY NOTO



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IT'S ALIVE!

Inside SAIC's Bio Art Lab, where poetry turns into viruses and yeast into music

By PAUL DAILING

David Hale doesn't know whether his poem will kill the culture.

It's not that "Affliction 11" is a bad poem. It's a beautiful one, a brief, subtle meditation on the transmission of belief, filtered through the 32-year-old's experiences at a Catholic university. But now that the poem's 309 characters have been assigned their accompanying letter-coded amino acids, which were then coded into RNA, which was then coded into DNA and inserted into *E. coli*, Hale doesn't know what will happen if he splices in the genetic code that will

let the biological, poetic virus culture sitting in the freezer of his San Antonio apartment replicate and grow.

"It itself could be toxic," he says. "Or maybe it doesn't do anything. Or maybe it does something weird, like it grows hair."

Em Adele Oppman, 22, meanwhile, is working out how to patent herself.

Oppman's goal is to see whether the 2013 Supreme Court case *Association for Molecular Pathology v. Myriad Genetics, Inc.*, actually ended the 25-year practice of gene patenting—that is, for-profit labs identifying and

claiming human genes as intellectual property in order to profit from any medicines or treatment derived from studying those genes.

"Part trying to raise awareness and explain this to my peers and part trying to really see what I can get away with, I am trying to do the slightest mutation possible so I can say that I tweaked this gene just enough that it's now my intellectual property," Oppman explains. "But hopefully the gene will still function as normal."

Oppman, who came to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to study sculpture, decided to work with the brain-derived neu-

rotrophic factor gene, which helps create a protein found in our brains and spines. They then identified the noncoding RNA, identified a sequence that was part of the gene but not the coding sequence, designed primers to amplify a region of the sequence, purified their DNA with Chelex 100, performed a polymerase chain reaction, and put it in gel.

Once they have their DNA growing in a bacterial plasmid—a small DNA molecule that can replicate independently of the rest of the DNA in the same cell—the process of mutating it starts. There are several options for mutat-

ing the sample; Oppman is currently leaning toward exposing it to UV light. Their goal is to find the smallest mutation that a patent lawyer can turn into a design or utility patent, which Oppman considers a loophole in *Myriad*.

Oppman and Hale, and also the student distilling the essence of gym socks, the student growing a mask out of mushrooms, and the student collaborating on a song with the yeast from her sourdough starter have all done their work at SAIC's Bio Art Lab. Down in the basement of the MacLean Center at 112 S. Michigan, they use test tubes, beakers, microscopes, centrifuges, fungi, bacteria, and worms to create art that, quite literally, is alive.

“DON'T OPEN THOSE”

Department of Art and Technology Studies professor Eduardo Kac and grad student Yutaka Makino first opened a bio lab for research, not classes, on the MacLean Center's fourth floor in 2003.

“It was a very, very small kind of tiny space—basically a closet,” recalls Anna Yu, the department's assistant director of facilities.

That lab shuttered in 2004 so the valuable space in the gallery-packed campus could be used to fabricate surface-mount circuit boards. Bio art seminars continued, showing students the work being done in the field, but there was no lab where students could dive in and create their own living art. Kac had to wait 10 years before the perfect spot became available.

“Life is supple and also very resilient, but the one thing that we know that life cannot exist without is water,” Kac says.

In other words, they needed a sink.

The current facility—with an industrial sink—opened in the basement in 2014, costing the school a total of \$50,000 covering everything from carpentry to centrifuge. It's a biosafety level 1 lab. The highest biosafety level is 4, at which Ebola, Kyasanur Forest disease, Marburg, and other potential pandemics are studied. A level 1 lab like SAIC's is similar to what one might find at a community college or a particularly well-funded high school, according to the Federation of American Scientists. The biosafety levels set security protocols (whether you need a hazmat suit or can eat your lunch in the lab) and also limits on what materials a lab can work with, from DNA strands to individual cells to multicellular organisms like living animals.

“We can do multicellular organisms. We don't,” says Bio Art studio and Critical Genetics lecturer Andrew Scarpelli, who is also a



Lichen © ANDREW SCARPELLI

molecular biologist. “We don't have an ethical review board, so we don't do anything with animals. But if we wanted to [study multicellular organisms], it's just human cells are out of line and certain unsafe microorganisms. For instance, certain strains of *Yersinia pestis* that caused the [bubonic] plague would be allowed here as long as they're not deemed dangerous to people, but if there's any that could cause disease, those would be banned.”

That's a hypothetical—there's no *Yersinia pestis* in the lab. But there are plastic containers full of dirt and earthworms used to compost. There are wonky cat masks, cuddly teddy bears, road cones, and pillows, all grown from mycelium (that's mushrooms to us). And there's a metal locker filled with vials from the olfactory art class that also meets in the room. The names scribbled on the vials include “Big Sur,” “Magenta,” “Meadow,” and “Gym Socks.”

“It is a lot worse than you can possibly imagine,” Scarpelli says of the distilled essence of sock. “When it starts to degrade, it's this very acrid thing that just eats the back of your throat. Don't open those.”

Scarpelli and lab coordinator Lynika Strozier are the scientists among the artists.

In May of this year, Strozier, 34, received her master's degree in biology from Loyola University Chicago and her master's degree in science education from UIC. With 12 years of research experience and what she describes as a dedicated personality—“I eat, breathe, sleep science,” she said—she soon parlayed her education into a research position at Rush University Medical Center.

It wasn't a good fit. She arrived at the SAIC lab in August.

“I think what drew me to this position, I would be doing a little bit of everything,” she says. “It wasn't just focusing on streak plating and isolating colonies and doing that same thing over and over again. After a while it becomes very repetitive, it becomes very annoying.”

Scarpelli, who received his Ph.D. from Northwestern and has expertise in microbiology and synthetic biology, says his goal is to give the artists the science they need to make their ideas happen, whether it's burying a polylactic acid toy boat in worms and dirt to see if PLA plastic is as biodegradable as believed or it's helping one of the three current students trying to get different microorganisms—slime mold, yeast, and bacteria, respectively—to write music by converting their chemical signals into MIDI files.

“The Bio Art course as it currently is right now is that the first eight weeks become this giant crash course in all sorts of different biology,” he says, “just because we have some students who want to work on human genetics and then other students who want to work on sculpting like topiary or bonsai, and then some students who want to work on something purely bacterial.”

It's often a starting point for projects the artists will continue on their own, Scarpelli says, either because of graduation or other reasons. For example, the type of DNA work required for the next step of Oppman's self-patenting project will require a biosafety level 2 lab.

Outside the lab, Scarpelli is one of the founders and lead organizers of ChiTownBio, a 501(c)(3) biotechnology meet-up. Eventually hoping to open a community biolab like New York's Genspace or Silicon Valley's BioCurious, the group holds events like biotech book clubs, barroom lectures on and playing with slime molds, enzymes, and strawberry DNA, and the yearly Bacterial Art Holiday Spectacular, held tonight at the Empirical Taproom, where attendees paint glowing *E. coli* reindeer, Christmas trees, bacteriophage viruses, and dreidels.

“What's great about [the SAIC program],” Scarpelli says, “is that artists have a great enthusiasm, and it's really just being here as a biologist to match up what they do with the right language.”

ETHICS AND ETHYLS

The Bio Art Lab is part of SAIC's Art and Technology Studies department. Starting in 1969 as the Kinetics area, “Art and Tech,” as Yu, Kac, and the faculty call it, has evolved into a catch-all wonkaverse for media that don't quite fit into painting, sculpture, or the rest of SAIC's more traditional offerings

One of Art and Tech's basement rooms holds what Yu called “retrotech”—Apple IIs, eight-inch floppies, Atari cartridges, and oscilloscopes. Students either use the tech to create new art or for “media archeology,” preserving old art created at the time when a Commodore 64 was the most bleeding of edge. It's next to the Light Lab, where students with blowtorches in hands and breathing tubes in mouths melt and shape glass rods, making sure to blow into the tube so the hot glass doesn't collapse on itself before krypton, argon, or neon can be pumped into it and lit up. Next comes the Kinetics Lab, one of the nation's oldest facilities for teaching art students how to build and use mechatronics: whirling gears, chains, motors, rotors, and sundry doodads that make artwork dance like clockwork.

Kac created the term “bio art” in 1997. He'd been creating digital art since 1982 and working online since 1985, transmitting graphics through the French network and Internet precursor Minitel. By the 1990s, he wanted a term to separate the kind of art he wanted to develop from what he called the “frenzy” around the then-newfangled Internet craze.

“There was a lot of, in my view, nonsensical discourse around the web,” Kac says, “people talking about uploading their consciousness online and things like that.” ➔

continued from 17

Since then, the Brazilian-born artist has used the banner of bio art and, later, transgenics, which he defines as the transfer of synthetic or natural genes between organisms, to install a computer chip inside his body (*Time Capsule*, 1997), translate a Bible verse into Morse code and from there into DNA base pairs (*Genesis*, 1999), and implant his genetic code into a petunia he calls “Eduina” (*Natural History of the Enigma*, 2003-08). In 2017, Kac and five other practicing bio artists wrote “What Bio Art Is: A Manifesto,” a mission statement for the medium, containing such directives as “All art materials have ethical implications, but they are most pressing when the media are alive.”

“This is more of a renewal of vows, if you will,” Kac says. “It was written deliberately, consciously, 20 years after the fact by the founders of the movement.”

Hale, who came to SAIC for the writing program, had long been interested in taking “words off of the page,” with past projects including projecting his poems on a wall. He wanted to explore what a poem is when separated from the ink on a page or the pixels on a screen. He had a chance not to write on college rule or iPad, but on the stuff of life, and he took it.

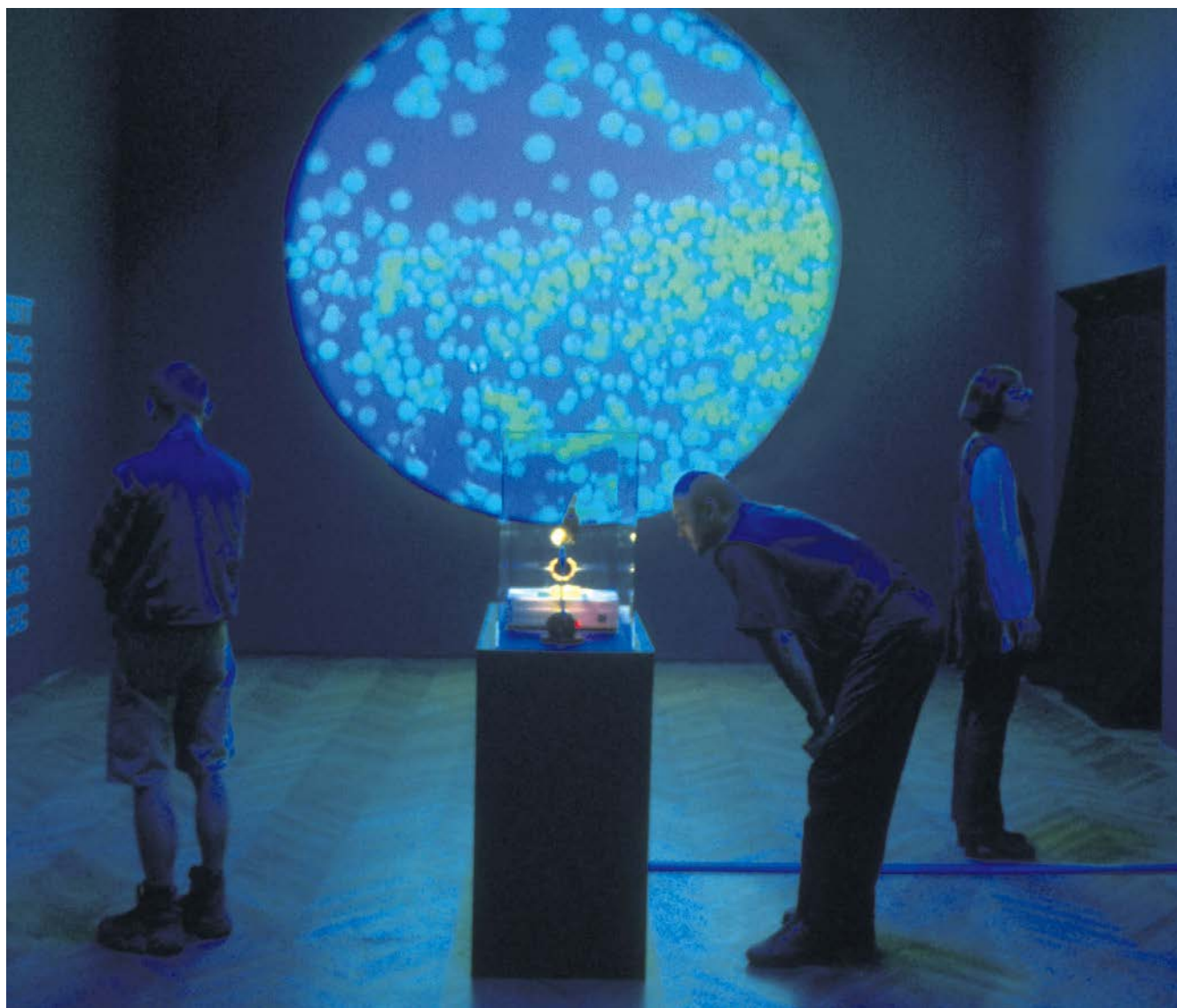
Much of his effort, he said, was writing a poem good enough to be worthy of the medium. Writers talk about breathing life into their words. Hale had to come up with words to breathe into life.

Kac understands.

“It’s humbling to work with life,” Kac says. “Life is absolutely incredible and marvelous, and the more we believe we know, the more amazing and incredible life becomes.”

But why work in bio art at all? Why sculpt in mushrooms and paint in slime mold? Why write poems in DNA instead of on paper? The answers are as varied as the reasons students a few floors above work in paint. Picasso had different motives than Bob Ross.

The cat masks and teddy bears grown of mycelium are cute but also train future makers in the use of what Scarpelli calls “a really nice futuristic packaging material” and insulator that could be used to replace Styrofoam. The compost worms show the artists which supposedly biodegradable materials actually biodegrade, and how quickly. Starting with the inaugural contest in 2016, Bio Art Lab students have competed in the yearly Biodesign Challenge, an international competition among colleges and universities around the planet to find biotech solutions to social issues, submitting ideas like a startup that converts used diapers into fertilizer and a prototype “living bathhouse” that (hypothetically) recycles the waters of California’s Mono Lake.



Genesis by Eduardo Kac

There are no prerequisite courses and it’s not part of any particular program, although Bio Art Lab is one of the courses recommended for students interested in studying Sustainable Design.

“The Fine Arts program is very open. You can be a photographer one year and you can be a sculptor the next year. You can just move around and take whatever you want,” Yu says. “The bio art curriculum in terms of Art and Tech, you don’t have to have any [science] background. You can just decide ‘I want to make something that I just thought up.’”

—PHENYLALANINE ISOLEUCINE ASPARAGINE—

But back to the question that may have been bothering you since the first line of this story: How do you put a poem inside *E. coli*?

Each of the 20 amino acids has a corresponding single-letter database code biologists have

used for decades to standardize communication. Phenylalanine, which is found in breast milk and NutraSweet, is F. Tryptophan, which helps adults balance nitrogen content and, despite constant Thanksgiving assertions, does not actually make you sleepy, is W.

Each amino acid also has a corresponding DNA codon, a three-letter combination made up of A, T, G, or C to symbolize the four nucleobases that make up DNA: adenine, thymine, guanine, and cytosine.

So “M,” the first letter of “Affliction 11,” becomes methionine, which becomes ATG, which becomes adenine joined to thymine joined to guanine in the possibly toxic, possibly hairy poem in Hale’s freezer.

One of the first hurdles was linguistic rather than chemical. There are 26 letters in the alphabet but only 20 amino acid codes, meaning Hale’s bijou, expressive stanza couldn’t use the letters B, J, O, U, X, or Z.

“I couldn’t put the title in,” he says, laughing.

His project is on hold since his May 2017 graduation, since funding comes more easily to a project living in SAIC’s Bio Art Lab than in a Texas poet’s freezer. Catching funding as he can, Hale’s next goal is to code for bioluminescence so each strand of *E. coli* in the sample starts to glow as “Affliction 11” infects it.

His poem about the transmission of faith through human culture will spread through a bacterial culture, leaving a deep, internal glow on all it touches.

Or it will kill everything. Or make it grow hair.

Lights like palliating glimmer

A wish masks

A prayer

Distilled

As epithet

In epidemic’s wake

That’s the end of a poem written in the language of life itself. 

 @1001chicago

ARTS & CULTURE

RR READER RECOMMENDED ALL ALL AGES FREE



The cast of *Algorithm Nation or, The Static Quo* © TODD ROSENBERG

COMEDY

Strictly status quo

The Second City's *Algorithm Nation or, The Static Quo* feels stuck in the system.

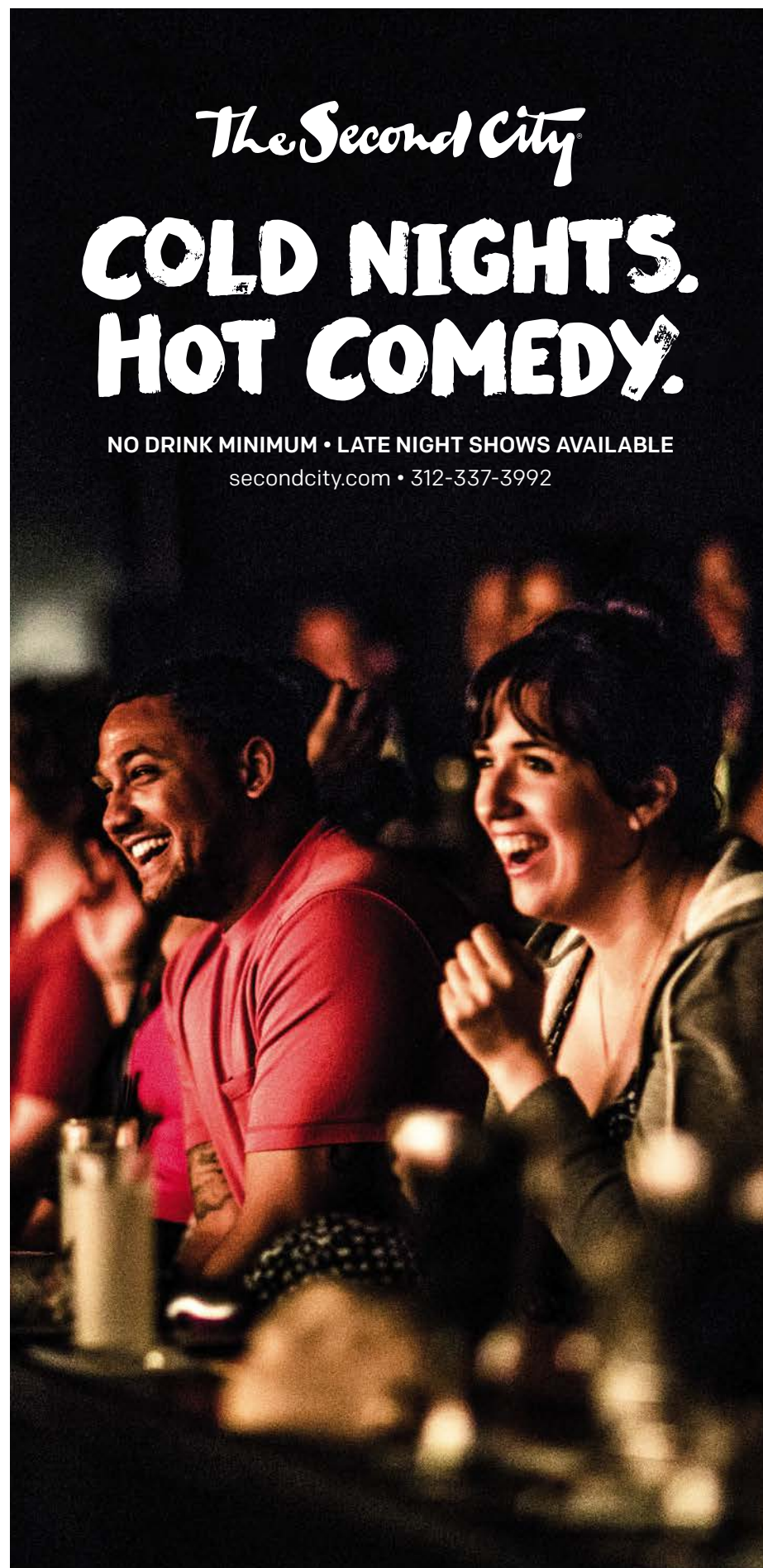
By BRIANNA WELLEN

On a recent episode of the improv podcast *Spontaneanation with Paul F. Tompkins*, comedian Tawny Newsome aired some grievances about her time at Second City in Chicago. She said that up until at least 2012, the final year she was a part of the ensemble, female performers were required to wear dresses. That was difficult because improv is all about moving around, losing yourself in a scene, not worrying if a skirt will fly up, showing off bits you might not want to show off. It's something that the men on stage didn't have to worry about. And it's a subtle reminder that even if some of the most progressive, boundary-pushing performers are cast in a show, Second City is still drawing the boundaries.

The cast of the 107th mainstage revue, *Algorithm Nation or, The Static Quo*, was all dressed in black turtlenecks and black pants regardless of gender, which is at least some

progress since Newsome's tenure. Well, all except for Jeffrey Murdoch, who in the opening scene is in his underwear, tied to a chair with duct tape over his mouth and nipples. Nate Varrone, flashing an eerily large smile, joins him and begins giving the tourist-friendly Second City spiel about the famous alums who have graced the stage in between bouts of berating Murdoch and smacking him as hard as he can with a pool noodle. What follows is a very aggressive opening number that involves guns, violence, and red flashing lights and seems intended to shock and upend expectations. Even with those Second City boundaries in place, the cast wants the audience to know they're doing things differently. Or they're at least trying their very best.

Algorithm Nation hits the requisite political punchlines, unavoidable in 2018, with mixed results. Later in the first half, Ryan Asher plays the host of a "Women for Trump" ➔



ARTS & CULTURE

continued from 19

rally. Asher is one of the most high-energy performers in the cast, and it's hard to keep your eyes off her when she enters a scene. In that way, this sketch was a great showcase of her talent. But it also demonstrated that, given how quickly events have progressed and the seriousness of current accusations, Trump jokes aren't that funny anymore. The folks who support Trump are becoming more and more difficult to parody because they already feel like parodies of themselves. How do you parody a parody? As Asher high-kicked her way across the stage listing off the president's values, it was more trigger- ing than entertaining.

Moments that didn't directly reference 45 were more successful. Tyler Davis was a standout in this regard with a song called "Dave is Dead." While the song itself is not overtly hilarious, Davis uses a blues-style ballad to tell the story of a young black man who was killed, then came back as a zombie for some "undead vigilante justice," noting at the end of the song that, just kidding, "he'll never get this chance because Dave is dead." What is always most impressive about the Second City cast is its range of talents, and Davis should be given every opportunity to showcase his musical chops. Murdoch and Varrone nicely wrapped several of the past year's scandals into one sketch as a pair of television hosts who realize through an anniversary clip show that when it comes to racism, sexism, and good ole fashioned bigotry, they might have ended up on the wrong side of history (Asher and Emma Pope play their younger counterparts).

The biggest laughs of the night came from evergreen sketches: a bride left at the

altar, played by Kimberly Michelle Vaughn, cries her way through the Cha-Cha Slide; a girl group comprised of Asher, Pope, and Vaughn sings about astrology and goes into the crowd to ask audience members, "What's your sign?"; a son and stepdad, played by Asher and Murdoch, try to find common ground; and the entire ensemble, in a wordless sketch, endures a middle-school dance. But as talented as the cast is and as entertaining as some moments were, nothing felt unexpected. Even in the show's final moments, when things really go off the rails (I don't want to spoil the surprise), it's still very clear how everything falls into the Second City algorithm, a concept that the title suggests this show is trying to upend.

ALGORITHM NATION OR, THE STATIC QUO

Through 5/25/19: Wed-Thu 8 PM, Fri-Sat 8 and 11 PM, Sun 7 PM, and Tue 8 PM; also 11 PM Tue 12/18-Thu 12/20 and 10 PM Sun 12/23; no performances Tue 12/25 and 1/1, Second City Chicago Mainstage, 1616 N. Wells, 312-337-3992, secondcity.com, \$31-\$58.

As far as a night of comedy goes, you could definitely do worse. This is a group of dynamic performers who have a shot at a spot in the Second City-to-*Saturday Night Live* pipeline. But when there are so many other progressive and innovative shows happening in the city, it's becoming increasingly difficult to see where a theater that wanted to keep women in dresses fits in. 

 @BriannaWellen



THEATER

The disappeared

Isaac Gomez wanted to know more about the women who were abducted on their way to work in Juarez. So he wrote *La Ruta*.

By JACK HELBIG



JOEL MOORMAN

Some writers write to explain. Others write to entertain. Isaac Gomez, the 27-year-old author of *La Ruta*, now receiving its world premiere at the Steppenwolf Theatre, writes because he can't not write; writing is how he finds words for as yet unnamed, unexpressed ideas and feelings.

"I was always a writer," he says. "I kept a journal and in middle school, I did a stage adaptation of [Barbara Robinson's 1971 comic young adult novel] *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*." But growing up in a working class Mexican-American family in El Paso, Texas—his mother worked at a Walmart and his father worked construction—Gomez had no idea writing, let alone playwriting, could be a full-time profession. So instead, he turned his attention to acting.

When Gomez was a student at the University of Texas at El Paso, a friend committed suicide by jumping off a garage roof. The suicide affected Gomez deeply.

"That really broke my spirit," Gomez says. "The only way I could cope with all of the feelings was to write about it." His writing turned into a play, and in the process he found his vocation. Today his plays have been workshopped or produced at theaters around the country, including the Goodman, Victory Gardens, Chicago Dramatists, and the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Gomez has been working on *La Ruta* sporadically since his senior year of college. "It was my first formal play," he says. It's set on the U.S.-Mexico border where he grew up and focuses on the plight of *las desaparecidas*, the missing women of Juarez who were abducted and murdered on their way to and from work in the *maquiladoras*, factories set up by foreign, often U.S.-based, companies in Juarez that were notorious for low wages and poor

working conditions.

Gomez became interested in *las desaparecidas* when a friend at school asked him what he knew about the abducted and murdered women and he had to admit he knew nothing. He was ashamed of his ignorance because he had grown up in the El Paso-Juarez area and even had cousins who lived in Juarez, so he began researching. The more he researched, the more obsessed he became. He interviewed women who worked in the *maquiladoras*, family members of women who had been killed, and a newspaper editor in Juarez who had connections to the drug cartels, trying to put it all together.

LA RUTA

12/13-1/27/19: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat-Sun 3 and 7:30 PM, Tue 7:30 PM, no performances Tue 12/18, 12/25, and 1/1, and Wed 12/20, Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted, 312-335-1650, steppenwolf.org, \$30-\$72.

Gomez ended up writing two pieces based on his research: *La Ruta*, which he describes as "a creative reimagining based on the interviews I collected," and a one-woman show called *The Way She Spoke* that follows his journey talking with people in Juarez and El Paso and features their stories in raw and unedited form.

"Writing for me comes from trying to understand," he explains. "When I write there is something in the pit of my stomach, something I am trying to shake out. Writing for me is a very cathartic experience." 

 @JackHelbig

RR Stomp
Through 12/30: Wed-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 and 6 PM, Tue 7:30 PM; no performance Tue 12/25, Broadway Playhouse, 175 E. Chestnut, 800-775-2000, broadwayinchicago.com, \$39-\$122



COURTESY THE ARTIST

DANCE

Everything and the kitchen sink

Just about anything can be an instrument in *Stomp*.

TO BE MORTAL is to sense that time passes and is finite. To make rhythm is to know that time subdivides infinitely—the more you make, the more you have. This is the beauty of *Stomp*, a wordless percussion piece, created by Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas and developed through the nearly 30 years of ensembles that have performed it. It demonstrates this concept in vignettes that can be appreciated as much for their mathematics as they can for their visceral wit. Presented on a stage set with scrap metal, street signs, and trash cans, the scene is an urban alley anywhere, its personages ragtag and bruised but unbowed by the vocations and situations implied by the objects that come into their hands and under their feet: brooms, sawdust, pipes, matchboxes, paint cans, and (yes, literally) kitchen sinks. Anything can be an instrument and anything can be expressed in the music they produce—territories established, kings and queens made and unmade, defiance, humor, pleasure, idiosyncrasy, community. The principles are clear and quickly established: it's not the ones who tap the loudest who have the greatest power but the ones who make the most of what they have and share it with the others. Every brown, black, and white face and body in the 12-member cast is distinctive, alive, and intent on creating and connecting.

Stomp says nothing and everything; its message of invention, inclusion, and play is all the affirmation of life and hope we need in a dark season. —**IRENE HSIAO**

ARTS & CULTURE

THEATER

Maybe get an Uber next time?
Hellcab's appeal remains just as mystifying now as it was in 1992.

The reason for the popularity of *Hellcab*, Will Kern's evening-length one-act set in a Chicago taxicab right before Christmas, has long eluded me. Famous Door's original 1992 production, initially slated for 12 performances, ran for ten years, a nearly unheard-of feat for an off-Loop show. In the middle of that streak, Chicago's New Crime Productions turned it into a movie, featuring Gillian Anderson, John Cusack, and Julianne Moore, no less. This millennium, Profiles Theatre staged it for four consecutive holiday seasons, and now the Agency Theater Collective offers its second annual take on the seemingly indefatigable piece, this time with a female cabdriver.

Regendering the cabbie makes for good promotional copy ("the first ever female-led production") but leaves the script's fundamental flaws unaddressed. Beyond its halting, underdeveloped scenic structure—most of the cab rides end just as something of consequence arises—the whole affair reifies a certain bourgeois privilege: it's somehow the cabdriver's "hell" to drive rude, drunk, creepy, belligerent, racist, distressed, and/or devoutly religious people a few blocks for money (tell that to the young female passenger with the hatefully abusive boyfriend, or the one who was just raped). Worse, the script asks us to accept unquestioningly the cabbie's belief she's in dangerous territory driving anywhere on the south side except Bridgeport.

Director Cordie Nelson's underpaced production features a number of affecting performances, a real cab center stage, and a truly moving finale. But the route to that climax is a dispiriting slog. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** **HELLCAB** Through 12/30: Thu-Sat 8 PM, Sun 3:30 PM; also Mon 12/17 8 PM, Raven Theatre, 6157 N. Clark, 773-680-4596, wearat-heagency.org, \$5-\$20.

RR Ready, set . . .
A lot goes right in *The Play That Goes Wrong*.

This 2012 play, written by Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer, and Henry Shields for London's Mischief Theatre and now playing at the Oriental Theatre, could as easily have been called *The Set That Goes Wrong*. At least 50 percent of the comic bits in this amusing, intensely physical comedy involve mishaps with the scenery (brilliantly designed by Nigel Hook): wall hangings fall, a door won't open, an elevator malfunctions, etc. The set is so integral to the story about a provincial theater company that tries—and fails—to put on a rather lackluster fictional 1920s murder mystery that it's virtually another character. (The Broadway production of the play won the Tony for best scenic design, naturally.)

The humans in this production—the host of awful actors and incompetent crew members—also play their part in running the show off the rails. The ensemble's packed with adept physical comedians, able to wring laughs out of jokes both small (in one running bit, one actor keeps stepping on the hand of another actor playing a corpse) and large (one of the more elaborate gags is a blatant steal from/ ➔

Salute to Vienna™ New Year's Concert



Photo by Chris Lee

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ARTS & CULTURE

➡ homage to that master of silent physical comedy, Buster Keaton). The show's slow to get started—some of the repetitions in the first act make it feel padded—but the stakes are higher in the deliriously funny second act, as the level of chaos rises and the actors are forced to do increasingly dangerous feats. They struggle mightily to keep the story going—and, to our intense delight, fail. —**JACK HELBIG** *THE PLAY THAT GOES WRONG* Through 12/16: Thu-Fri 7:30 PM, Sat 2 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM, Oriental Theatre, 24 W. Randolph, 800-775-2000, broadwayinchicago.com, \$32-\$157.

RR Elf name: Crumpet
The Santaland Diaries hilariously exposes the ugly underbelly of the holiday season.

The Santaland Diaries at the Goodman is a hilarious adult romp through the holiday season. This one-man show, adapted by Joe Mantello from David Sedaris's 1992 *This American Life* essay, delivers an uncensored tour through the dark heart of retail, told through the eyes of Crumpet, one of Santa's elves at Macy's. This show offers desperately needed catharsis: someone finally admits that maybe the dog-and-pony show we call Christmas isn't really for the kids after all.

Actor Matt Crowle possesses an easygoing scruffy, yet impishly charming persona that plays like a best friend dishing hot gossip after work as he delivers a long string of anecdotes about the terrible behavior of ridiculous parents, crazed shoppers, and a less-than-ideal Santa Claus. He keeps the laughs coming—and

he'll make you thank your lucky stars for your nonretail day job.

The story of an affable loser is evergreen no matter the era, and most of the decades-old references still work well comedically, funny now for their glorified irrelevance. Like many older productions, though, a few lines in the script have unintentionally traded their comedic weight for dramatic over the years. One antiquated reference to mentally handicapped people, for instance, landed like the proverbial turd in an otherwise tasty punchbowl; it was 15 minutes before Crowle regained the trust of the audience. Fortunately, he was able to turn things around, no small feat when one is the only person on stage. —**SHERI FLANDERS** *THE SANTALAND DIARIES* Through 12/30: Wed-Thu 7:30 PM, Fri 8



The Play That Goes Wrong

© JEREMY DANIEL

coziness of the surroundings. Audience members can sit on big, comfy sofas, ensconced amid a half dozen tastefully decorated artificial Christmas trees, and listen to Grandfather tell young Cora the legend of the Winter Wolf while sipping hot cocoa on Christmas Eve. Depending on your tolerance for holiday feel-goodism, you'll either roll your eyes at the shameless pandering or snuggle up to the theatrical equivalent of comfort food.

Certainly, this Otherworld Theatre premiere offers its fair share of nourishment in the form of folkloric mysticism. The eponymous character, a pathetic animal spirit who hunts for humans standing on the brink of death, is an ingenious invention that feels both ancient and contemporary, and Shariba Rivers, manipulating an oddly suitcase-like puppet version of the creature, breathes just the right combination of solemnity and playfulness into the proceedings. And as Cora and Grandfather, Molly Southgate and Mike Rogalski find exquisite chemistry. While Zettellaier's *Twilight Zone*-esque tale is ultimately a bit slight, it holds a certain genuine wonderment.

Speaking of wonderment, we were informed during an opening-night curtain speech that Otherworld Theatre is the only theatrical venue "in the world" dedicated to fantasy and science fiction, making me quite intrigued to see the company's enormous compendium of every performance space on the planet. —**JUSTIN HAYFORD** *THE WINTER WOLF* Through 1/6/19: Thu-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2:30 PM; no performance Sun 12/23, Otherworld Theatre, 3914 N. Clark, 773-857-2116, otherworldtheatre.org, \$20 or pay what you can. **R**

PM, Sat 4 and 8 PM, Sun 2 PM; also Tue 12/18, 7:30 PM, and Mon 12/24, 2 PM, Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn, 312-443-3800, goodmantheatre.org, \$25-\$61.

RR The weather outside is frightful

But *The Winter Wolf* is so delightful, with its infinite capacity for wonder.

With his original 70-minute Christmas "fairytale play," Joseph Zettellaier takes a stab at creating a new family-friendly holiday classic, and director Lauren Nicole Fields makes a concerted effort to up the Hallmark

LA RUTA

A visceral and powerful world premiere about the missing women of Juárez, Mexico

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BOOK SWAP

Lit recs to dismantle violence, both the personal and systemic

In Book Swap, a *Reader* staffer recommends two to five books and then asks a local wordsmith, literary enthusiast, or publishing-adjacent professional to do the same. In this installment, *Reader* staff writer **MAYA DUKMASOVA** swaps book suggestions with activist and organizer **MARIAME KABA**.

Maya Dukmasova, Reader staff writer

I'm a slow reader and rarely find time to pick up books unrelated to my *Reader* beats. But lately my therapist has been recommending titles, books I probably wouldn't have had the wherewithal to pick up on my own. They are about the most fundamental relationships in our lives—the ones that set the tone for all that comes after and our relationship to the world within and outside ourselves.

One was Alison Bechdel's ***ARE YOU MY MOTHER?: A COMIC DRAMA*** (Houghton Mifflin, 2012). It's a graphic novel sequel to her much more famous *Fun Home*, and, frankly, it's much better. While *Fun Home* was all about Bechdel's relationship with her father, this book is about her mom and an unsettling and thought-provoking meditation on the perils of daughterhood. The narrative doesn't emerge from any chronological storyline but rather from concentric circles of self-cannibalizing thoughts that somehow, over the course of the book, lead to new conclusions. Bechdel never does figure out her mom (as I think is the case for most of us), but she somehow finds peace and relief from the anxiety of long-held grievances against her. It's surprisingly soothing as a third-party reader-observer to witness her getting there. Not only will the book get you thinking deeply about your own relationship with your mother, but it's also an excellent primer on psychological theories of child development that

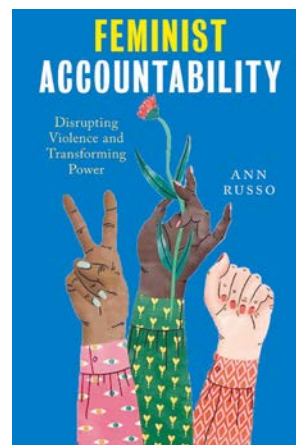
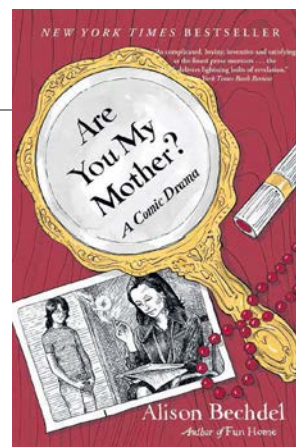
serve to explain so much about our adult lives. Bechdel's grayscale drawings are accented only by shades of pink, and they powerfully render much of the conceptual, inarticulable content of her thoughts and experiences into concrete gestures, expressions, and actions.

The second book my therapist encouraged me to read is ***ALL ABOUT LOVE: NEW VISIONS*** (William Morrow, 1999) by Bell Hooks. Turns out it's not a favorite among some die-hard Hooks fans, but I'm ashamed to say it's the first book I've ever picked up by the legendary feminist critic and scholar. I've never before considered all of the assumptions that go into the concept of love—assumptions we never discuss or dissect or challenge. The goal of the book is to pick apart what exactly love means and to gently untangle ideas about love from those about caring, about responsibility, about desire or fear. Hooks posits that the cycle of pain, misunderstanding, and lovelessness that animates not only our lives but also our society begins with a fundamental misconception about what it means to love and to be loved. She delivers her message in terse, thematic chapters that present her revelations about love through pointed personal anecdotes and well-curated references to other academic and literary work. If you don't come away with a transformed mindset, you'll at least have an exciting new reading list.

Mariame Kaba, activist and organizer

I've spent a lot of time reading this summer and fall, which is surprising given how busy I've been with work.

I'm a huge admirer of Lorraine Hansberry, so I rushed to pick up a copy of ***LOOKING FOR LORRAINE: THE RADIANT AND RADICAL LIFE OF LORRAINE HANSBERRY*** (Beacon Press, 2018), a



new biography written by the brilliant Imani Perry. I was not disappointed by this book. It's beautifully written and covers Lorraine's short but incredibly full life, from her childhood in Chicago to her abbreviated college years in Wisconsin through to her success in New York City. Hansberry was part of most of the significant radical movements of the early-to-mid-20th century, including communism, socialism, and the black freedom struggle. The violence of racism, homophobia, and sexism is ever-present in her life, but she is not defeated by the forces of oppression. Instead, she courageously confronts them. Perry captures her self-doubt and her confidence. Hansberry was ahead of her time in so many ways.

This is an unconventional biography, as Perry doesn't shy away from sharing parts of her own life and journey too. Rather than detracting from Lorraine's story, that literary device adds to the readability of this book. Too little is known about Hansberry's life. When people talk about her, they usually focus on her play *A Raisin in the Sun*, but *Looking for Lorraine* underscores the fact that there's so much more to her than that one play. In the current era of people talking about citing black women and elevating black women's intellectual contributions alongside our organizing, this book is essential.

My friend Ann Russo has a new book out titled ***FEMINIST ACCOUNTABILITY: DISRUPTING VIOLENCE AND TRANSFORMING POWER*** (NYU Press, 2018). It's another perfect book for our current historical moment. The word "accountability" has become a buzzword in this #MeToo moment. Yet the concept is poorly understood. Russo explores the praxis of accountability as a feminist, a scholar, a practitioner of transformative justice, and an internationalist. This book is a useful primer for those who want an introduction to the concepts of transformative justice and community accountability. As we consider how to support people who cause harm to take responsibility for their actions, we need more clarity about how to do that without relying on the punishing state. This book helps us to formulate better questions as we strive not to replicate the limitations of carceral feminism, which tries to end violence by relying on the violence of the prison industrial complex. We need more books that focus on nonpunitive ways to address harm. *Feminist Accountability* is wonderfully readable and a great addition to the canon. **✎**



MOVIES

The head and the heart

In *Shoplifters*, the sharpest insights are blurred by sentimentality.

By BEN SACHS

Orson Welles has made films with his right hand and films with his left hand,” Francois Truffaut once wrote. “In the right-handed films, there is always snow, and in the left-handed ones there are always gunshots.”

By a similar token, one might say that Japanese writer-director Hirokazu Kore-eda has made films with his head and films with his heart. The “head” films (which would include *Maborosi*, *Still Walking*, and *The Third Murder*) tend to be unsparing in their scrutiny of characters and the social codes they live by, while the “heart” films (which would include *After Life*, *Air Doll*, and *I Wish*) tend to be more sentimental, focusing on growth and reconciliation. Yet the distinction between Kore-eda’s two sides isn’t as hard and fast as it is with Welles. One reason why *Nobody Knows*, *Our Little Sister*, and *Like Father, Like Son* are such powerful films is that they begin as “heart” films and move unexpectedly into “head” territory. Some of the best Japanese movies of the 21st century, they draw you in with their sympathetic character portraits, then surprise you with their complex insights about the difficulties of family relationships. (In contrast,

Kore-eda’s *Hana* and *After the Storm* start out tough and then go soft, which is why I consider them minor works.)

With *Shoplifters*, which won the Palme d’Or at this year’s Cannes Film Festival, Kore-eda strikes a balance between the two sides of his creative persona, with neither one overwhelming the other. *Shoplifters* alternates between tender and sobering observations, and the frequent alternations keep the movie unpredictable. Kore-eda doesn’t just change the emotional register from scene to scene, but within individual scenes; he also manages these shifts so gracefully that they never feel jarring. When he moves from a sentimental mood to a stark one, the effect is like being woken with a splash of cold water; yet when Kore-eda transitions the other way, it feels like he’s retreating from his own insights. These moments of retreat, which make *Shoplifters* an occasionally frustrating experience, speak to Kore-eda’s worst tendency as a filmmaker—his Spielbergian desire to reassure, if not placate, his audience in spite of the bitter truths he has to share with them. Thankfully these moments aren’t fatally distracting, as Kore-eda’s head is around to keep his heart in check.

Shoplifters tells the story of a surrogate family scraping together an existence in Tokyo through means both legal and illegal. The de facto patriarch, Osamu (Kore-eda regular Lily Franky), works odd jobs; his partner, Nobuyo (Sakura Ando), irons clothes at a commercial laundry. They live with an elderly woman, Hatsue (Kirin Kiki), and her granddaughter, Aki (Mayu Matsuoka), along with a boy, Shota (Jyo Kairi), who appears to be around ten years old. The elderly woman brings in money through her pension checks and by milking her grown daughter for cash, while the granddaughter works at an erotic peep show booth. Even taken together, these sources of income aren’t enough to keep this group afloat, so Osamu and Shota steal food from local supermarkets to feed everyone. The film, in fact, starts with a scene of them shoplifting; Kore-eda presents their smuggling in fascinating detail, showing how the two have gotten their routine down to a science. Already the film achieves a balance between toughness and sentimentality, as one recognizes the winning camaraderie between the grown man and the boy while intuiting the dire conditions that have forced them to steal.

Later that evening, the family decides to take in a five-year-old girl named Juri, who lives in their neighborhood with parents who are alternately abusive and neglectful. The group’s first dinner with Juri exudes warmth and a sense of interpersonal connection, with the various members taking protective interest in the little girl. (In a nice touch, Hatsue blows on Juri’s food to keep it from burning the girl’s mouth.) Kore-eda encourages viewers to disregard the fact that the family has just kidnapped a child—their behavior towards her is so loving that one excuses their crime, much like one forgives Osamu for having taught a boy to steal since their efforts keep several kind people from starving. It complicates matters somewhat that neither Juri nor Shota comes across as excessively cute. Kore-eda, one of the best directors of children in cinema, renders the characters as complex as the adults; one sees in their guarded behavior how poverty has made them prematurely tough, even if they’re too young to realize how tough they are. (Note how Kore-eda allows his child actors to appear fixated by small details and look away from the other players—with this strategy, he captures the enigmatic quality of children that most other filmmakers seldom bother to consider.)

Shoplifters also relates (like *Nobody Knows*

before it) how children acclimate to the worst situations. In one of the film’s most revealing scenes, Shota and Juri, walking home from a shoplifting expedition (the little girl quickly learns to steal just like the rest of the family), pass two other children on their way home from school. Shota explains to his surrogate sister that school is only for kids who can’t study at home—likely a lie he’s heard from one of his “parents.” The unassuming way with which the boy reiterates the lie shows the extent to which he’s been manipulated by the adults in his life, and it points to the moral questionability of their behavior. Yet for much of the film, Kore-eda undercuts this moral complexity by making the parents seem like children themselves. Their clever responses to poverty sometimes suggest children’s games, and their desire for familial bonds seems to exceed that of the kids they’re raising. (Osamu’s insistence that Shota call him “Dad” is certainly the film’s most mawkish motif.) If anything, the characters are too likable; Kore-eda renders them so sympathetic—and the culture they inhabit so cruel—that one can overlook their transgressions.

The film implies that the characters wouldn’t have to break the law if life under late capitalism were more equitable, and Kore-eda’s reminders of everyday inequity throw the family’s kindness into sharp relief. In a pivotal scene, Nobuyo’s boss at the laundry takes Nobuyo and a coworker aside and informs them they must decide between themselves which one will agree to be laid off. In another, Aki cuddles with one of her customers at the peep show after she intuits that he’s having a bad day—her behavior seems altruistic until she interrupts the cuddling session because the man has paid for only so many minutes of intimacy. This scene exemplifies the push-pull quality of *Shoplifters*, presenting an almost trite observation about the need for human connection in an unfeeling world, then following it up with a stinging insight of how even those who feel that need the strongest have been conditioned to think of themselves first. I think the film would have been stronger, though, if the sweet and sour details weren’t so evenly dispersed. Kore-eda is at his best when he’s suppressing his sentimentality, not when he’s indulging it, but like his characters, fans of this inspired filmmaker must learn to take the good with the bad.

@1bsachs

THE 20TH ANNUAL ANIMATION SHOW OF SHOWS ★★

98 min. In English and subtitled German. Fri 12/14–Thu 12/27. Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State, 312-846-2800, siskelfilmcenter.org, \$11.

ARTS & CULTURE



MOVIES

Sketchy

This year's Animation Show of Shows amuses more than astonishes.

By BEN SACHS

The selections in this year's Animation Show of Shows (curated, as always, by Ron Diamond) tend to be more amusing than inspired; my favorite works in the program provided me with momentary delight rather than lasting astonishment. The most representative piece may be *Business Meeting*, a pencil-drawn short from Brazil that delivers an absurdist send-up of corporate conferences. Running a little under two minutes, *Business Meeting* presents a distinctive style, serves up some laughs, makes its point, then promptly ends. Less funny but no less terse is the German short *Carlotta's Face*, which conveys in five minutes what it's like to live with face blindness. Codirectors Valentin Riedl (who's also a neuroscientist) and Frédéric Schuld incorporate into their 2-D animation drawings made by a girl with this mental condition, and the images provide deeper insight than the poetic narration.

The lengthier pieces in the program vary in degrees of success. *Age of Sail*, perhaps the

most ambitious selection, tells a tale of a ship captain and a female passenger lost at sea in 1900. The storytelling is moderately engaging, but I found the clunky 3-D animation distracting; additionally, director John Kahrs crams so many climaxes into the 12-minute running time that the piece feels monotonous. By contrast, the 15-minute, dialogue-free *Weekends* is more modest both narratively and visually, but far more entertaining on the whole. Comprised of hand-drawn images, it presents short, witty scenes of a grade-school-aged boy spending time with each of his divorced parents in 1980s Toronto. As the short progresses, director Trevor Jimenez (who based the piece on personal memories) drifts into the boy's dream life, showing how events from his daily life turn terrifying in his subconscious. The result is a wry if not especially novel portrait of a child of divorce.

The piece that came closest to bowling me over was *Grands Canons*, a stop-motion animation by French artist Alain Biet. In this work, Biet assembles realistic drawings he's made of tools, writing implements, and other everyday objects, presenting one after another in a sort of cavalcade. I marveled at the specificity and verisimilitude of Biet's art as well as the sheer multitude of drawings he's produced. Another stop-motion work, Veronica Solomon's *Love Me, Fear Me*, also brings together two kinds of artistry, in this case clay animation and choreography.

Solomon uses shape-shifting clay figures to perform modern-style dance, and the effect is often mesmerizing. The choreography is also surprisingly dark—it makes up for the handful of saccharine shorts on the program, namely the Pixar knockoff *One Small Step*, about the relationship between a girl who longs to be an astronaut and the devoted father who supports her dreams. 

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ARTS & CULTURE

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Free Solo

MOVIES

Charm City

This documentary that captures the daily lives of citizens, police officers, and government officials in Baltimore between 2015 and 2017 also shows how encounters among this uncomfortable triad by turns help and compound the issues of a troubled city. Highlighted members of this system include a young councilman who declares Baltimore's epidemic of drugs, violence, and poverty a public health crisis; a female police officer raised in one of the city's most blighted neighborhoods who empathizes with the residents' struggles; and the paternal head of an East Baltimore community center who inspires peacekeeping on a high-risk block. Filmmaker Marilyn Ness gains extraordinary access to her subjects and apparently their trust, given her ride alongs with police and attendance at funerals for victims of gun violence. Moreover, in humanizing all sides of the conflict, Ness arrives at its crux: that all sides should spend more time talking and listening to one another. **—LEAH PICKETT 108 min. Fri 12/14, 3:45 and 6 PM; Sat 12/15, 3 PM; Sun 12/16, 5:30 PM; Mon 12/17, 7:45 PM; Tue 12/18, 6 PM; Wed 12/19, 6 PM; and Thu 12/20, 7:45 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

Free Solo

This awe-inspiring *National Geographic* documentary is as much a celebration of U.S. parks and wilderness as it is a record of one of the most audacious feats in the history of mountaineering: Alex Honnold's 2017 ascent of Yosemite's 3,000-foot-high El Capitan without ropes or backup in under four hours. Codirectors Jimmy Chin and Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi (*Meru*) prepared for three years to film the summit, meticulously planning every possible angle and approach so that they could be ready to go on short notice and also stay out of the athlete's way to avoid endangering his life. Not surprisingly, the small production crew, climbers themselves, share facetime on camera, and thus the

movie takes on a zen-like meta aspect. Equally pleasing is the yin-yang dynamic between the sinewy, boyish, intense Honnold, a UC Berkeley dropout who is philosophical about death, and his petite, irrepressible lover Sanni McCandless, cheerily dedicated to keeping him alive. **—ANDREA GRONVALL PG-13, 100 min. Fri 12/14, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 12/15, 5 and 7:30 PM; Sun 12/16, 2 PM; Mon 12/17, 6 PM; Tue 12/18, 8 PM; and Thu 12/20, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center**

The Great Pretender

Self-delusion is the principal subject of this short, acerbic comedy by Nathan Silver (*Stinking Heaven*), which centers on the production of an autobiographical stage play. The author (Maëlle Poésy-Guichard) is a young French woman who's using the play to work through her feelings about her boorish ex-boyfriend (Linas Phillips); the stars (Keith Poulson, Esther Garrel) are a couple of well-intentioned narcissists looking for love in all the wrong places. Each of the four characters takes a turn narrating the story, and Silver, directing a script by Jack Dunphy, mines plenty of humor from the rift between how these people behave and how they see themselves. Garrel gives a standout performance as the most naive of the bunch; she's so winning in the role that you almost forgive her character for the lies she tells herself. Sean Price-Williams's dreamy cinematography is another asset, conjuring up a romantic mood that provides ironic counterpoint to the bitter comedy. **—BEN SACHS 71 min. Fri 12/14, 7 and 9 PM; Sat 12/15, 3, 5, 7, and 9 PM; Sun 12/16, 1, 3, 5, and 7 PM; Mon 12/17-Thu 12/20, 7 and 9 PM. Facets Cinematheque**

Mary Queen of Scots

The rivalry between the Tudor Queen Elizabeth I of England and her cousin the Stuart Queen Mary of Scotland makes for a gripping tale of palace intrigue in the feature directorial debut of Josie Rourke, head of London's prestigious Donmar Warehouse (a theater

that launched its previous artistic directors Sam Mendes and Michael Grandage into movies). She reinvigorates the often staid biopic genre with her keen eye for composition and movement within the film frame; we can almost feel the sweep of history as Mary (Saoirse Ronan) and Elizabeth (Margot Robbie) target each other through their proxies, none more alluring and treacherous than lusty Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley (Jack Lowden), who, as Mary's second husband, plots for the throne. Screenwriter Beau Willimon (*House of Cards*) specializes in complex political scenarios; it's a shame that everything collapses when the queens finally meet in a sequence that has all the heft of a gauzy Chanel fragrance spot. **—ANDREA GRONVALL R, 125 min. 10:45 AM, 12:15, 1:40, 3:15, 4:50, 6:15, 7:45, 9:15, and 10:40 PM. Century 12 Evanston/CineArts 6**

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse

Phil Lord—one half of the duo responsible for *The Lego Movie* and 22 *Jump Street*—cowrote this animated Marvel Comics adaptation, and like the films he codirected, it exhibits a free-for-all wackiness reminiscent of 1930s Looney Tunes. Set in a parallel universe, the story follows a mixed-race teenage boy who transforms into Spider-Man after some baddies kill the original Spidey, Peter Parker. Those same villains have also opened up a portal to alternate realities, and soon enough, the young hero finds himself fighting crime alongside every iteration of Spider-Man in the Marvel canon. Maintaining a breathless pace, the filmmakers pile up sci-fi conceits, one-liners, and a melange of animation styles; as opposed to lots of other comic book adaptations, this actually captures the sensation of getting absorbed in a comic book. Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, and Rodney Rothman directed. **—BEN SACHS PG, 117 min. ArcLight Chicago, Century 12 Evanston/CineArts 6 Chatham 14 Theaters, City North Stadium 14 IMAX & RPX Crestwood 18, ICON at Roosevelt Collection, River East 21, Rosemont 18, Showplace Cicero 14** 



Dorian's programming director Joe Bryl spins records on the small stage behind the bar.

Honoring the vanishing musical culture of Wicker Park

In some ways, Dorian's is just one more boutique bar and restaurant. But its record store and music bookings connect it to the neighborhood's 1990s arts community.

By **LEOR GALIL**

PHOTOS BY **PINAR ISTEK**

Last month, Block Club Chicago broke the news that Texas cooler company Yeti would open its second brick-and-mortar store in the 4,796-square-foot Wicker Park space occupied till February 2017 by long-running music venue the Double Door. Earlier this month, the odds of the venue reopening in the neighborhood apparently declined to zero when a sign reading “Future home of the brand new Double Door” appeared at a Smashing Pumpkins pop-up at the Wilson Avenue Theater in Uptown.

Both developments provided new opportunities for locals to bemoan the fate of Wicker Park, though in fairness the Double Door, which opened in June 1994, helped fuel the rising rents that eventually forced it out. In a 1994 *Reader* story, Jeff Huebner wrote that complaints about gentrification had been sim-

mering since the mid-80s, and in the early 90s, tensions boiled over between established Latinx residents and the majority white newcomers who'd built a burgeoning arts community in the neighborhood. The Double Door opened two months before his story came out—and three months after the *New York Times* put a spotlight on Wicker Park in an effort to declare Chicago as “the Latest Next Seattle.”

As *Reader* culture editor Aimee Levitt pointed out in the 2013 story “The migration of the hipster,” Wicker Park had lost its reputation as a hotbed of anything by the turn of the century. Today rents and property values continue to skyrocket, and in June, real estate firm CA Ventures bought the Double Door's old building for \$9.1 million.

The legacy of Wicker Park's time as a creative hub survives here and there, though. Subterranean has one of the most eclectic ➔



The small record store that fronts Dorian's has an even smaller listening booth that doubles as the entrance to the bar and restaurant. It's also the only room with windows.

The records that line one wall of the bar and restaurant aren't back stock for the shop—they were added as an acoustic treatment.

continued from 27

concert calendars in the city, and last month its Tuesday-night hip-hop open mike series celebrated its 20th anniversary with a concert headlined by west-side heroes Do or Die. Chop Shop has booked some surprising up-and-comers and exciting reunions since veteran talent buyer Brian Peterson took over in 2015. Danny's Tavern (technically in Bucktown) dodged a bullet in 2015 and continues to endear itself to fans from several different scenes: it's where Chicago jazz drummer Makaya McCraven recorded his 2017 mixtape *Highly Rare*, where Beau Wanzer has hosted progressive electronic-music night Hot on the Heels for 12 years, and where friends and fans recently paid tribute to the late Phil Hertz, founder of dance-focused distributor Crosstalk International.

The neighborhood's bona fides as a destination for serious music people got a boost in September, when a new venture called Dorian's opened in a storefront of the Flat Iron Arts Building at 1939 W. North. The space includes an intimate bar and restaurant with a small stage for live music and DJs (ostensibly the main draw), but from the sidewalk you



can't see any of that: it's all hidden behind a tiny, brightly lit record store. The store's wide, shallow space is just 120 square feet, and its listening room, equipped with a turntable and headphones, is only slightly bigger than a phone booth. The only way to get into the bar and restaurant (a much more generous 2,500 square feet) is through a sliding door in the western wall of the listening room. The name

"Dorian's" doesn't appear anywhere on the front of the building. Instead the front door says "The Record Shop" and lists hours of operation unusual for a retail space: 5 PM till 2 AM Thursday through Saturday, 5 PM till midnight Wednesday and Sunday.

I was skeptical of the gimmick at first. The vinyl format increasingly seems like more of a lifestyle accoutrement than a way to hear

music. When record-subscription service Vinyl Me, Please launched in 2013, it bundled the discs with cocktail recipes intended to complement the "listening experience," which made its shipments look like starter packs for affluent wieners willing to pay for simulations of good taste. Were the records for sale at Dorian's playing a similar role?

Dorian's co-owner Zack Eastman is also co-owner of Logan Square hot spot East Room, so he already knows how to cater to music fans. He had music in mind when he started batting around ideas for the business with the other two folks involved—Debonair Social Club co-owner Steve Harris and Beauty Bar operating partner Derek Berry. The three of them had already used the Dorian's space for three pop-ups: the *Saved by the Bell* diner, *Saved by the Max*, which ran from June 2016 till May 2017; the Riot Fest restaurant, *Riot Feast*, open for three months in summer and fall 2017; and the Fake Shore Drive tenth-anniversary bar, *Fake Shore Dive*, which lasted three days in October 2017. The partners considered continuing with pop-ups, but Eastman says they were worried the bloom was off the rose. "We were seeing this success," he says, "and then also dilution of that whole style of short-term concepts."

Eager for a permanent project, the trio stuck with the combo of food, drinks, and music, deciding to abandon the tie-in aspect of the pop-ups, whose novelty seemed destined to expire. "It's a big thing for all of us to say, 'How can we make music a focal point in this space as well?' That was something that we really tried hard to accomplish," Eastman says. To help, they recruited scene veteran Joe Bryl as programming director. Bryl has been DJing in Chicago since 1982, and his CV reveals him as a consistent thread through decades of Chicago nightlife. He cofounded adventurous jazz venue HotHouse in Wicker Park in the mid-80s, became the first DJ for River West nightclub Funky Buddha Lounge in the late 90s, served as musical director for Ukrainian Village dance spot Sonotheque in the 2000s, and started as music programmer at Bridgeport bar Maria's Packaged Goods in 2012.

Harris pitched Bryl on Dorian's late last year. At the time, Bryl had been DJing at cozy spots such as Sportsman's Club and the Whistler, sometimes with friends Scott McNiece (of record label International Anthem and music-programming service Uncanned Music) or Alejandro "King Hippo" Ayala. During his sets, he would experiment with what he perceived to be fringe music in order to test his audiences.

The view from the Dorian's stage,
over Joe Bryl's shoulder



The door from the listening
room to the bar is just out
of sight to the left.



“People were really kind of focused, and insistent even, on grooving to the music, even though it might be some spiritual-jazz track that was 20 years old,” Bryl says. “There was an interest I didn’t understand at the time that existed out there. I think it has some relationship to how artists like Kamasi Washington, and even how people on the International Anthem label like Makaya McCraven, are making inroads into the mainstream. It was a heartening thing to see people’s interest in music I thought they might not have a relationship at all to.”

Bryl brings the same sensibility to his job at Dorian’s. In the short time it’s been open, he’s shown how broad the umbrella of jazz can be—and that such music can feel at home in a space that also showcases DJs interested in soul, boogie, outre house, and hip-hop. Among Bryl’s DJ bookings so far are Alejandro Zerah (aka Leja Hazer), a Gramophone Records employee and cofounder of the globally minded Hesperian Sound Division label; Shazam Bangles of DJ collective Boogie Munsters, which focuses on boogie, funk, and soul; and house and hip-hop veteran Tone B. Nimble, who also has a keen ear for gospel. Bryl also sporadically books live jazz combos on the 250-square-foot Dorian’s stage, located behind the bar—Chicago jazz saxophonist and composer Isaiah Collier performed with his trio, the Chosen Few, the first weekend of December.

Bryl hired McNiece and Uncanned Music to re-engineer the space acoustically to benefit DJs and live performers. McNiece recommended buying a sound system from Italian company Esoteric Pro Audio, because the International Anthem artists who’d played London’s Total Refreshment Centre in fall 2017 had been so impressed by the EPA setup there. “It wasn’t a muscular PA, but it was really natural sounding and full,” McNiece says. Dorian’s purchased two of EPA’s compact Trio systems, one for each leg of the L-shaped main room. “It’s very clear—you could do a live gig or a DJ gig, and it could have a resonance,” Bryl says. “It could be loud, but at the same time, you and I could have a conversation like we’re having now and it’s not gonna be intrusive.”

Bryl also oversees the record store, which doubles as a check-in and waiting area for the main room (and also sells vinyl until closing time). Most of the 12-inches in stock are used, and many come from Bryl’s personal collection—he estimates he’s amassed 20,000 records over the years. But he also buys vinyl from International Anthem and Chicago-based

record-resale site Reverb LP, and further fills out the Dorian’s stacks with selections on consignment from DJ David Tropicalazo (who brings in records from Mexico City) and former Shake Rattle & Read owner Ric Addy.

Dorian’s store holds roughly 600 records. Bryl says they’ve sold about 300 since opening in September—the bar and restaurant bring in the real money—and they refresh part of their stock at the beginning of every month. There are no LP divider cards, but when I stopped by the night before Thanksgiving, the selection was broadly organized by genre—jazz, soul, Latin, indie rock, funk, hip-hop. I didn’t expect to buy anything, but I couldn’t help myself when I found a 1986 copy of Schoolly-D’s 1984 debut single, “Gangster Boogie” b/w “Maniac.”

Eastman and his collaborators intended to give the bar and restaurant at Dorian’s a tiki feel: chef Brian Fisher, formerly of Schwa and Entente, devised a menu distantly inspired by Polynesian food, and beverage director John Hess included tiki-inspired cocktails on his menu. They were less interested in tiki-bar kitsch, though, and more in creating an immersive experience. After my pre-Thanksgiving

visit, when I caught DJ sets by Star Creature Universal Vibrations owner Tim Zawada and Chicago hip-hop legend the Twilite Tone, I got a mild shock when I stepped back onto the sidewalk and into the cold wind, in part because it’s impossible to see the street from inside—I’d temporarily forgotten where I was.

Dorian’s is right around the corner from the old Double Door space, but it provides a degree of reprieve from the congested, hectic six corners neighborhood. In some ways it fits the area’s new character—it’s boutiquey and

a little pricey, with \$13 cocktails and “shared plates” going for \$15 to \$22—but in others, most notably the way it respects music and the people who love it, it respects the values of 1990s Wicker Park. “Double Door closed down, and for a lot of people that signified the cultural demise of Wicker Park,” McNiece says. “For something like Dorian’s to pop up not long after that, it’s a nice reminder that the culture lives on.” 

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Deniz Tek (top) and Rob Younger of
Radio Birdman © COURTESY THE ARTIST

JAMIE LUDWIG

Reader associate editor

Descent Into the Maelstrom: The Radio Birdman Story Protopunks Radio Birdman have a special place in my heart. The group emerged in 1970s Sydney with a transgressive attitude, smarts to spare (two members are doctors), and an ambitious sound that merged garage, surf, and high-energy Detroit rock 'n' roll. This 2017 documentary explores all that, plus how their outsider status and rejection of industry convention helped inspire a movement. I would've liked a closer look into the band's songwriting, but the film's wealth of concert footage and straightforward interviews make it a must-see for Birdman fans—and anyone else who loves independent culture.

The Hideout Few venues enjoy the Hideout's well-earned reputation for high-quality bookings, community atmosphere, and integrity. The cozy club has been there for us, and it's inspiring to see artists, fans, and industry folks alike helping it defend our city's musical culture against the Sterling Bay/Live Nation project threatening to swallow its neighborhood.

The Quietus on extremist ideologies in underground music The global surge of the far right has inspired a new Quietus series exploring how fascism and its cousins have appeared in underground music since World War II. The stories aim to push listeners to reappraise the past and to hold present-day artists accountable. Dylan Miller wrote the

A Reader staffer shares three musical obsessions, then asks someone (who asks someone else) to take a turn.

first two installments—an introductory essay and a feature about satanic-fascist group Order of Nine Angles and its ties to neofolk—and they're both sobering, essential reads.

FERN X DECLINE

Vocalist of Decline

Galaxie 2.0 My favorite DIY venue in Chicago is definitely worth mentioning. Located in Ravenswood, Galaxie 2.0 is a community art space used for dinners, wedding receptions, swing-dancing nights, dance lessons, and of course alcohol- and drug-free all-ages punk and hardcore shows whose positive atmosphere makes the venue unique. Shows at Galaxie 2.0 are mostly booked by FYR Booking, so you can check FYR's Facebook page for more info about upcoming events.

Ray Cappo from Youth of Today, Shelter, and Better Than a Thousand I'd like to share this funny/silly fact about myself, which is also the answer to a question people frequently ask me: my main influence as a front man is Ray Cappo. He's the most energetic front man I've ever seen, with his intense screaming and high jumps onstage. When I first saw the album cover for Youth of Today's *Can't Close My Eyes* when I was a teenager, I said I wanted to be like the guy in that photo; I'm now in my 40s, and I'm still not like him.



Ray Cappo fronting Youth of Today
© TERRORMACHINE/FICKR

Midwest hardcore In the U.S., hardcore scene people unfortunately tend to look at bands from the coasts and overlook what's going on in the midwest. But here are some midwestern hardcore bands that I think are worth mentioning: Abraxas, Inclination, 2 Min-

ute Minor, Redbait, Time & Pressure, Better Days, New Heart, Bystander, Through N Through, Shots Fired Shots Fired, Vortex, Burdened, Bitter Truth, Spine, La Armada, Justice Decays, Death of Self, and Treason.

DAN TRAITOR

Guitarist of Racetractor

Nicholas James from Redbait Nicholas James met his comrades in Saint Louis hardcore band Redbait through activism, and he's a union organizer with the SEIU. When I asked him about connections between his music and work, he said, "I represent 6,000 black workers in a post-Jim Crow state. The institutional racism I witness daily makes the job's influence unavoidable." James invites coworkers to address the crowd during setup at the band's shows. "White male punks are not used to having middle-aged black women tell them to get their political head out of their collective ass," he says. "I love to watch this."



Redbait © VERONIKA REINERT

The Defiant Ones This HBO miniseries focuses on the collaboration between Jimmy Iovine and Dr. Dre. Its portrayal of Dre is compelling—he was exploited by Jerry Heller, Eazy-E, and Suge Knight, but never gave up. He reinvented himself by working with artists who pushed the envelope and created a sense of danger. And he seemed genuinely regretful about assaulting Dee Barnes. Also moving was Iovine's commitment to Dre—a big part of their friendship seemed rooted in values they developed growing up in harsh environments.

The search for "heavy" It's a driving force in black metal, death metal, and metal-influenced hardcore. Old Man Gloom's *No, Nails' You Will Never Be One of Us*, Behemoth's *The Satanist*, Nile's *Annihilation of the Wicked*—lo-fi or hi-fi, they're all brutal, aggressive albums in different ways. Is it the guitars, bass, or vocals that drive a record home? Rawness and energy or precise, mathematical polish?

ALL AGES FREE

MUSIC



PICK OF THE WEEK

Rapper Tobe Nwigwe shares the many facets of his life through his music

TOBE NWIGWE

Thu 12/13, 8 PM, the Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park, Chicago, \$25.

Tobe Nwigwe and Fat FRED AGHO

IN JANUARY 2017, Houston rapper Tobe Nwigwe uploaded a YouTube video called “#getTWISTEDsundays {Chill Bill},” the first in a series in which he freestyles while getting his hair twisted by his girlfriend Fat (the two got married later that year, and she took his last name as her own). Tobe, a 31-year-old first-generation Nigerian American and former linebacker for the University of North Texas, had released a prolific stream of singles punched up with raw skill, lyrical craft, and unique charm, but his magnetism is most evident in the #getTWISTEDsundays videos. This year he’s launched a new series of videos, dropping one almost every week under the banner “The Originals” and repackaging the audio into two self-released collections: May’s *The Originals* and October’s *More Originals*. The simple yet sophisticated video clips have a few things in common: they always

feature Tobe, Fat, and Tobe’s producer, LaNell Grant, and the trio almost always appear in boldly colored clothes that match the tones of their surroundings, such as their yellow outfits in March’s “Chill,” shot in Houston’s LeRoy Crump Stadium. Most of the videos feature dancing—sometimes from just Fat, other times from all three, doing an uncomplicated, synchronized routine. Tobe often raps about Fat and LaNell, which makes his songs and videos feel like glimpses of his interior life—and he comes off as unbelievably sweet natured, even when his verses land with the force of an anvil. By frequently finding new ways to celebrate the women in his life in song, giving them agency, and showing how they play a pivotal role in his work, Tobe shows how men in music at large—and hip-hop specifically—can be better allies and make great art. —LEOR GALIL

THURSDAY13

FRODE GJERSTAD 4TET 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$15, \$12 in advance. 18+

A rattling combination of jazz and unfettered freedom will be unleashed at Constellation when Norwegian reedist Frode Gjerstad arrives with a quartet replete with a pair of bassists. It’s always convenient to contextualize a performer within a national scene or genre, but Gjerstad has long had connections to improvisers in the UK and the U.S. (including Chicago percussionist Hamid Drake) and is able to adroitly navigate just about any collective. The saxophonist frequently performs alongside drummer Paal Nilssen-Love and bassist Jon Rune Strøm, both of whom have been known to frequent the Windy City. That trio, augmented by trombonist Steve Swell, recently released a live album called *Bop Stop* (Clean Feed) featuring four adamantly impromptu works recorded at the Cleveland venue of the same name in 2017. “Pop Bop” brims with squiggles and thuds courtesy of Rune Strøm, who’s given more than ample space on a bandstand crowded with elder performers. He ekes out some ecstatic proclamations while engaged with Nilssen-Love’s clattering backdrop; Gjerstad and Swell still manage to find brief, flowery moments of harmony amid the vortex. Rounding out the quartet for this local gig—but not in an attempt to replace Swell’s chattering brass—is bassist Øyvind Storesund, who’s been performing with Gjerstad since the 90s. With such an unorthodox lineup, the bandleader’s penchant for explosive spontaneity should be met head-on by sympathetic players challenged and inspired by his frenetic display. —DAVE CANTOR



Frode Gjerstad JUDITH S

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continued from 31
RUSS JOHNSON 8:30 PM, *Fulton Street Collective, 1821 W. Hubbard, suite 307, \$10 suggested donation.*

Trumpeter Russ Johnson is a fleet, lyrical soloist and a shrewd, supportive accompanist with a satisfyingly broad tone—qualities that made him a prized sideman during his 23-year sojourn in New York City. Since moving back to his home state of Wisconsin in 2012 to take a teaching position at University of Wisconsin-Parkside, he's been a frequent visitor to Chicago. He is equally valued as a collaborator and supporting player for saxophonist Nick Mazarella and bassist Matt Ulery, among many others, but he's really come into his own as a bandleader. On the 2014 album *Meeting Point* (Relay), his first recording as a midwesterner, there's plenty of common ground between his melodic sensibilities and the freewheeling improvisational approach favored by the rest of the band. This fall's *The Headlands Suite* (Woolgathering), on the other hand, showcases Johnson's gifts as a composer. Originally commissioned by the Hyde Park Jazz Festival, it's a sturdily constructed and deliberately paced sequence of themes that elicit forceful rhythms and lucid solos from Ulery, drummer Jon Deitemyer, and keyboardist Rob Clearfield—whose reverberant electric piano provides a rich contrast to Johnson's bold, rasping leads. During the first set tonight, the quartet will play the entire suite, and in the second they'll perform *Cluster*, another suite that will be released as a digital-only album next year. —**BILL MEYER**

TOBE NWIGWE See *Pick of the Week*, page 31.
8 PM, *the Promontory, 5311 S. Lake Park, Chicago, \$25.*

CHARLES RUMBACK QUARTET 9 PM, *Elastic, 3429 W. Diversey, \$10.*

At the core of the Chicago jazz and improv scene is the constant building of new groups fueled by distinct personnel, concepts, or instrumentation. Drummer-composer Charles Rumbach has exemplified this particularly well in his many projects. In 2017, he released *Threes* and *Tag Book*

with his trio of pianist Jim Baker and bassist John Tate, and both of those subdued acoustic albums play with the relationship between structured improvisation and composition. But with Colorlist, his trio with Charles Gorczynski on woodwinds and synths and John Hughes on synths and other electronics, he approaches music from another angle. On the group's recent *Full Circle* (Serein), the band creates soundscapes that are clearly informed by jazz but incorporate a sonic palette rooted in the broad genre of electronica, which allows them to explore realms of bubbling and pittering ambience, collections of subtly glitching gestures, and washes of frequencies that emphasize the ambiguity of sound; it can be hard to distinguish what's synthesizer and what's saxophone (processed or acoustic). Tonight at Elastic, Rumbach will experiment with another group entirely—a quartet consisting of violinist Macie Stewart, alto saxophonist Greg Ward, and Baker (who will be playing electronics in addition to piano), which will undoubtedly surprise and innovate. This show is the stage debut of the quartet, and soon they'll make their debut on record—an album with these musicians, Hughes, and others is currently in the works. —**IZZY YELLEN**

FRIDAY14

BRUGES *Oozing Wound headlines; Rectal Hygienics and Conduit open.* 9:30 PM, *Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$10.* 21+

When you take members of unhinged noise-rockers Den, crusty grinders Moral Void, and doomy hardcore outfit Angry Gods and put them together in a band practice room, you can be sure of a couple of things about any music they'll produce: it's gonna be intense, and it's gonna be fuckin' loud. And that's exactly what's happened in Bruges, a local four-piece consisting of bassist Matt Russell, vocalist Pat Nordyke, drummer Nate Kappes, and guitarist Dylan Piskula. In 2016, the group released a five-song demo of sludgy pigfuck noise-rock layered with distorted bass and ear-piercing guitar feedback, but on their brand-new singles "Through a Muted Lens" and "Atop a Precipice," the group really show what they're made of. Engineered by Piskula and Russell, the tracks are grim, achingly slow exercises in amplifier worship, alternating between all-out Unsane-flavored noise fury and minimal, tortured throbs. Later this month, the band will hit the studio to begin work on a new full-length, and if their recent output is any indication, you should be very scared for your eardrums. And speaking of your eardrums, earplugs are absolutely mandatory for tonight's show. Local thrashers Oozing Wound headline, and two more groups of deranged wall-of-sound noise-rockers join Bruges to open: Chicago four-piece Rectal Hygienics and New York outfit Conduit. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

IVY LAB 8:30 PM, *Subterranean, 2011 W. North, \$18, \$15 in advance.* 17+

As Ivy Lab, London producers Gove "Sabre" Kidao and J "Stray" Fogel are associated with UK bass—an ambiguous melange of British-born electronic sub-genres: drum 'n' bass, UK garage, dubstep, and a



Bob Seger PATRICK MCBRIDE



MUSIC

Ivy Lab
 COURTESY THE ARTIST

little bit of grime. But Ivy Lab don't make that style of music as much as they thoroughly distort it; on 2015's *20/20, Vol. 1*, recorded when producer Laurence "Halogenix" Reading was a member of the group, they seem to slow their UK bass down with cement bricks—eliciting slow, mutant groans and unexpected bass drops. But on May's *Death Don't Always Taste Good* (20/20 LDN Recordings), they shed some of their earlier supersize affectations, which I can only describe as American: big, plodding, and incorrigible. The new album has more obvious hooks and the kind of thorny, gnashing multilayered production that makes it sound like a mutant instrumental hip-hop collection. Perhaps some inspired MCs will try to rhyme over, say, the kitchen-sink clatter of "Snack Time," but it'll take a visceral performance to stand out against Ivy Lab's unsettling collage. —LEOR GALIL

BOB SEGER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND
 8 PM, Allstate Arena, 6920 Mannheim, Rosemont, sold out.

Famed gonzo music critic Lester Bangs once exclaimed, "I respect Bob Seger as much as almost anybody I can think of in the music business today." Bangs's admiration was mostly due to the fact that since the mid-60s, Seger had paid his dues hacking it out in grimy rock bands, most notably Bob Seger & the Last Heard, which by the end of the decade had morphed into the magnificent, swaggering acid-rock group the Bob Seger System. Earlier this year, the singles produced by the Last Heard (which never recorded a full album) were finally released as an LP compilation, *Heavy Music: The Complete Cameo Recordings 1966-67*, and pressed by Third Man, a label from Seger's home turf, Detroit Rock City. The Last Heard were a grunting, sweaty, primal garage band on par with many of their more celebrated peers, and they inspired fellow Michigan rockers such as a young Iggy Pop. It might be unfair to even discuss this era of Seger's career, as he hasn't played this material live in decades—but the Bob Seger System's "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man" has appeared in some recent set lists, which makes me wonder if Seger might allow their first LP, *Noah*, to be reissued someday. So back to the issue of respect: Seger is beloved by millions, but I can't help but feel that he doesn't get the same level of mad props as fellow everyman troubadour Bruce Springsteen. Maybe that's because Seger never fashioned himself a poet, or produced a hip, singular masterpiece such as Springsteen's *Nebraska*—though not enough peo-

ple heard Seger's mellow, downer-folk fourth solo LP, 1971's *Brand New Morning* (another way-out-of-print rarity begging to be reissued). Sure, Seger's radio-friendly anthems, including "Still the Same" and "Like a Rock," were rammed down our throats via commercials, but while having a song placed in an ad was considered passé in rock circles for generations, these days it's essentially on par with getting a hit record in terms of status. And yeah, "Old Time Rock & Roll" is still overplayed, and Spinal-tallica ruined the haunted ode to weary truckers "Turn the Page," but neither offense negates Seger's status as a true heartland demigod. This is supposedly the last leg of Seger's "Roll Me Away" tour (which stretches into 2019), so if you have some serious cash to burn, go see him belt out "We've Got Tonight," "Mainstreet," and "You'll Accompany Me." And if you can do it unironically, wave a lighter in the air for me. —STEVE KRAKOW

SATURDAY 15

BOMBA ESTÉREO See also Sunday. *La Reyna Tropical* opens. 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, sold out. 17+

In the 90s, Bogotá bassist and producer Simón Mejía was strongly influenced by Sidestepper, a British and Colombian collective that combined electronic music with salsa and cumbia rhythms. He's been following a similar blueprint with his band Bomba Estéreo since 2005, and the formula hasn't gotten old yet. That's in no small part thanks to Mejía's incendiary collaborator Li Saumet, who sings and raps with tireless, infectious grit. The band's most recent release, *Live in Dublin* (Polen), captures the butt-swiveling, arm-waving rush of their performances, with loose-limbed drumming from Andrés Zea and stinging wah-wah guitar from Jose Castillo vying for attention with Mejía's joyfully cheesy synth lines. The track "Raza" evokes the atmosphere of a raucous party on a flying saucer, with every space alien tentacle-slipping and hip-dipping off into the stratosphere. Saumet attacks their 2010 breakthrough hit "Fuego" with passion, imploring listeners to keep the party going as she spits out the chorus: "Mantenlo prendido fuego / No lo dejes apagar y grita 'fuego'" ("Keep it on fire / Do not let it go and shout 'fire'"), as coiled rhythms find the common ground between Colombia and Jamaica. World beat and electronic dance music can both get tedious, but Bomba Estéreo keeps them fresh by shaking them together. —NOAH BERLATSKY ➔

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MUSIC



Bomba Estéreo

ORLY ANAN

continued from 33

SUNDAY16

BOMBA ESTÉREO See Saturday. La Reyna Tropical opens. 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, sold out. 17+

ADRIAN YOUNGE & ALI SHAHEED MUHAMMAD Dave Mata opens. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, \$20, \$18 in advance. 21+

Over the past five years, Adrian Youngue has become an in-demand producer within veteran hip-hop circles; he's received equal billing on full-length collaborations with Ghostface Killah (2013's *Twelve Reasons to Die*) and Souls of Mischief (2014's *There Is Only Now*), and he's knocked out tracks with the likes of Common, Jay-Z, and Kendrick Lamar. His most important collaborator, though, has been Ali Shaheed Muhammad of A Tribe Called Quest, and this year the pair released a self-titled album as the *Midnight Hour* (via Youngue's label, Linear Labs). They started the project in 2013 but had to table it after being hired to create the score for the short-lived Netflix series *Luke Cage*, a program based on the Marvel comic of the same name in which music plays a central role—a fictional nightclub called Harlem's Paradise provides a key backdrop. Youngue and Muhammad's involvement in the show wound up having a significant effect on *The Midnight Hour*, beyond just delaying its release. "It pushed us and made us better musicians," Youngue said of *Luke Cage* in a June *Billboard* interview. That experience also helped make *The Midnight Hour* feel detached from any specific time period. The sprawling, 20-track album is an orchestral trip through pop music, splicing together soul, hip-hop, jazz, and funk, but the producers have erased the lines between the styles while highlighting their roots—it's evident that the drum groove that opens "Dans un Moment D'errance" (played by Questlove) comes from the world of hip-hop, while the flamboyant trumpet lines by Keyon Harrold come from jazz. The end result comes out smooth, as if

this distinctive bricolage couldn't have turned out any other way. Youngue and Muhammad assembled a small army of collaborators for the project, including CeeLo Green, Raphael Saadiq, and Digable Planets' Ladybug Mecca—and they got the OK from Luther Vandross's estate to reimagine his 1986 song "So Amazing" with his original vocals intact. One contributor whose appearance piqued my interest is standout young Chicago soul singer Eryn Allen Kane, whose gravelly vocals on "Love Is Free" bring some much-needed grit to a thoroughly polished project. —LEOR GALIL

TUESDAY18

MIKE KINSELLA Dave Davison, Mark Rose & Bob Nanna, Avery Springer & Elton John Cena, Chris Sutter, Kyle Geib, Gillian McGhee, and Patrick Kelly & Alex Beach open. 7 PM, Beat Kitchen, 2100 W. Belmont, \$20. 21+

At the Beat Kitchen's Holiday Toy Drive, a jam-packed lineup of local emo and indie-rock icons will play acoustic sets while raising cash and collecting toys to benefit the SOS Children's Villages of Illinois. Headlined by American Football's Mike Kinsella (who moonlights as Owen in a solo capacity), the eight-set showcase includes bandleaders Dave Davison (Maps & Atlases), Bob Nanna (Braid, Lifted Bells), Mark Rose (Spitalfield), Avery Singer (Retirement Party), and Chris Sutter (Meat Wave), among others. Though prolific with his solo material, Kinsella is enjoying a higher profile of late thanks to the popularity of American Football's reunion—unexpected for a mathy, sensitive, underground band that barely played live before disbanding—and the self-titled second album that it released in 2016. Just months prior to that album, Kinsella released his eighth LP as Owen, *The King of Whats* (Polyvinyl)—another collection of gorgeous, instrumentally lush, emotionally resonant indie-rock tunes. The singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist remains at a creative zenith, and he's booked regular tour dates for both of his main projects—he doesn't seem to be slowing down anytime soon. —SCOTT MORROW

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7303 Incorporated, Inc. seeks Senior Accountant in Northlake, IL to: Guide mnthly rncilatlans & perfrm mnth- & yr-end clng & finan statmt prep, incl maint of gen ldr. Imprt lrg datasts frm Vadar Tax Liens Sys & Mscrft Excel to Mscrft Accss databases & creat, edit, & maint databases w/ in Mscrft Accss. Domestic travel: 3%. Reqs Bach dgre in Acctng or rtdt & 2 yrs exp in rtdt field. Reqs 24 mo prep income frcasting clctns & rprts; 24 mo prep annl company bdg, bus prjctns & perf anlyz; 18 mo utlzing Vadar Tax Liens Sys or smlr indstry spcfc stfwr to trck mnciply tax clctns; 18 mo utlzing Mscrft Accss to creat, edit, & maint lg pools of tax data; & 18 mo utlzing QuickBks & Mscrft Excel to prep acctng rprts & anlyz data. Mail resumes to Greg Bingham @ 336 E. North Ave #200, Northlake, IL 60164

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Canoesys, Inc. in Rolling Meadows, IL has multi openings in the following: Java Dvlpers I, II, III; Net Dvlpers I, II, III; QA Analysts I, II, III; Systems Analysts I, II, III. No trvl or telecomm. Job duties are proj-based @ unanticipated sites w/in U.S. Relo may be req'd at project end. Mail resumes to: Canoesys, Inc., Attn: HR, 3315 Algonquin Rd, Ste 102, Rolling Meadows, IL 60008.

Channel Manager, Butter & Cheese – Evanston, IL – Achieve channel objectives for butter & cheese categories, KPIs, & targets; develop relationships w/ portfolio of customers; liaise b/w customers & global teams to ensure delivery of solutions; develop new grocery channels; work w/ demand planning team to develop forecast & manage inventory flow; lead joint partner planning process; lead solution development efforts; ensure account activities are aligned w/ brand & category objectives; manage the trade marketing budget & spend; ensure price & commercial agreements are fully implemented; & keep the business informed of account, channel, and competitor developments. 40% domestic & int'l travel req. Reqs: 4 yrs. of exp. In the pos. offered or rtdt pos. 4 yrs. of exp. with sales and mgmt.. in a dairy sales environ.; key account mgmt. w/ a brand led consumer packaged goods bus.; sales data collection, analysis and interpretation to build credible recommendations to the bus. & customers; working with European Commodity Mkts., specializing in butter & cheese; dairy manufac. production cycles and seasonality; and working w/ logistics routing products between the US & Europe, incl. license, duty, tariffs & quotas. Send resume to Fergal Roche at Ornuu Foods North America Inc., Fergal.Roche@ornua.com.

Islamic Community Center of Illinois (Chicago, IL) seeks an Imam to lead daily prayer 5 times/day, deliver sermons & provide community consulting. Position requires certifications in: Holy Quran & Quranic Sciences/Hadith/Islamic Jurisprudence. Submit resumes to mohamed.elnatour@gmail.com. Ref. Job ID: Imam in subject line.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant

to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: D18156043 on December 3, 2018. Under the Assumed Business Name of MK CONSULTING with the business located at: 740 W. FULTON ST. UNIT 1006, CHICAGO, IL 60661. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: MEGAN KOVACH 740 W. FULTON ST. UNIT 1006, CHICAGO, IL 60661, USA (12/27)

Publication Notice of Court Date for Request For Name Change: Request of: Anthoula Roberta Patelidas. There will be a court date on my request to change my name from: Anthoula Roberta Patelidas to Athoula Roberta Lagunas. The court date will be held 1/29/2018 at 1 PM at 50 W. Washington Chicago in Cook County in courtroom #1704. (12/20)

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: D18155944 on November 16, 2018Under the Assumed Business Name of ATM CARES with the business located at: 12722 S. LAFLIN, CALUMET PARK, IL 60827 The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: ALICIA ROBINSON, 12722 S. LAFLIN CALUMET PARK, IL 60827, USA (12/20)

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to "An Act in relation to the use of an Assumed Business Name in the conduct or transaction of Business in the State," as amended, that a certification was registered by the undersigned with the County Clerk of Cook County. Registration Number: Y18000033 on December 6, 2018 Under the Assumed Business Name of EMMA'S DINER with the business located at: 5200 N SHERIDAN RD APT 301, CHICAGO, IL 60640. The true and real full name(s) and residence address of the owner(s)/partner(s) is: JOSHUA W. GOLDSTEIN 5200 N SHERIDAN RD APT 301 CHICAGO, IL 60640, USA (12/27)

VALENTINE'S DAY ISSUE
Want to send a note to someone special? An old flame, a missed match, or an ongoing partner? The Reader wants to be your destination for love. Call 312-392-2934 or email srlname@chicagoreadercorp.com to submit your message. First ten words free, \$10 for additional twenty words.

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SAVAGE LOVE

By Dan Savage

Slight Christmas

Sex advice for folks headed home for the holidays

Q: Straight and married but not boring, and heading to my parents' house for our first family Christmas since my asshole MAGA brother "stumbled over" the Tumblr blog where the wife and I posted about our sexual adventures. (Pics of MMF threesomes and cross-dressing/pegging sessions, plus some dirty "true enough" stories.) My brother has always been an angry screwup, so he leapt on the chance to make me look bad by sending the link to my parents, siblings, and even some close family friends. Our Tumblr blog is still up because we aren't ashamed. Any advice? — **TOTALLY UNCOOL MALICIOUS BASTARD'S LAME REVEAL**

A: Your Tumblr blog isn't going to be up for much longer, TUMBLR, as the company that owns Tumblr—Verizon—is ashamed of your blog and the millions of others like it. Tumblr announced last week that all "adult" content is banned as of December 17. And the definition of "adult content" is pretty broad: "photos, videos, and gifs of human genitalia, female-presenting nipples, and any media involving sex acts, including illustrations," although they will allow genitals and those wicked "female-presenting nipples" in images of classical art. (No contemporary junk or lady nips allowed.)

This is not just a blow to people who use Tumblr for porn—and that's most people who use Tumblr—but also to the sex work community. Sex workers had already been

driven off most other online platforms by anti-sex-work crusaders, and now sex workers are being driven off Tumblr as well. Forcing sex workers off the Internet won't end sex work, the stated goal of anti-sex-work crusaders, but it will make sex work more dangerous—which tells us everything we need to know about the motives of anti-sex-work crusaders. While they claim to oppose sex work because it's dangerous, they push policies that make sex work more dangerous. Sex workers weren't just advertising online, they were *organizing*—in addition to honing and making the political argument for decriminalizing sex work, they were screening potential clients and sharing information with each other about dangerous clients. Just like anti-choice/antiabortion crusaders, anti-sex-work crusaders don't want to *protect* women; they want to punish women for making choices they disapprove of. (As a general rule: if what you're doing makes people less safe, you don't get to claim you're trying to protect anyone—it's like claiming you only set houses on fire to drive home the importance of smoke alarms.)

Anyway, fuck your sex-shaming/smut-shaming brother, TUMBLR. As for the rest of your family, you and the wife should slap smiles on your faces and act like you've done nothing wrong—because you haven't done anything wrong. Your asshole brother is the bad guy, and any family members who wish to discuss how offended they were by your Tumblr blog should be directed to speak

with your brother, as he's the one who showed it to them.

Q: How can I explain to my sisters that although I am a free sexual woman, I still prefer men as sexual partners? My sisters are both involved with women and they cannot understand how, with all the awful sexual inequality in the world, I can still be primarily attracted to men. Sometimes I even imagine my sexuality as a gay man's sexuality in a woman's body, and I try to explain it to them in this way. I'm not a secret right-winger or someone kidding around by asking this question. This is a real issue.—**GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT**

P.S. I have a straight male friend who says he's a lesbian trapped in a man's body. What do you think of this?

A: People don't choose to be straight—some poor motherfuckers are born that way—any more than heteroromantic bisexuals choose to be heteroromantic bisexuals. You can't help who you're attracted to, GITMS, primarily or otherwise, and the contempt of family members can't change a person's sexual or romantic orientation. Your sisters should understand that, since they most likely wouldn't be with women if the contempt of family members had that kind of power.

As for describing yourself as a gay man trapped in a woman's body and your straight male friend describing himself as a lesbian trapped in a man's body . . . unless the two of you are



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SAVAGE LOVE

trans—in which case, you could be homos trapped in the wrong bodies—your friend is just another straight guy mortified by the mess straight people (mostly white, mostly men) have made of the world. You're also mortified by straightness, GITMS, or at least the sexual inequality that often comes bundled with it. But instead of your straight male friend opting out of heterosexuality (which he can't do) or you framing your attraction to men as a gay thing to get your sisters off your back (which you shouldn't have to do), your friend should identify as straight (because he is) and you should identify as someone who doesn't give a shit what her sisters think (because you shouldn't).

If good straight guys and "free sexual women" in opposite-sex relationships don't identify with heterosexuality and/or heteroromantic orientations, GITMS, all the shitty straight people will conclude that they get to define heterosexuality (which they don't).

Q: I'm a gay man in my mid 20s, and I'm getting more serious with a guy I met a few months ago. I was surprised to eventually learn that "Michael" is in his late 30s, since he easily passes for my age. I'm comfortable with the age gap, but I'm struggling with how to present this to my parents. Religious and conservative,

they were cordial but distant with the last guy I dated (who was my age). I'm afraid the age gap with my new boyfriend will create even more discomfort for them and that Michael will sense it when he comes along to visit for the holidays. I'm considering lying to my parents if Michael's age comes up. I've challenged my parents' attitudes for many years—but at this point, I'm willing to trade honesty for the chance to be treated even a little bit more like a "normal couple" at Christmas. Is it selfish to ask Michael for permission to lie about his age? I'm nervous to even share my feelings with him for fear it will give the impression I'm embarrassed by him.—**AWKWARD**

GATHERINGS EXPECTED GIVEN AGE PECULIARITY

A: Tell one lie to make your relationship seem more acceptable to your parents, and you'll be tempted to tell them more lies—and I don't know about you, AGE GAP, but not having to lie to mommy and daddy anymore was one of the reasons I came out of the closet. And if you want your parents to be comfortable with Michael, if you don't want them to think there's anything wrong with their son dating an older man, deceiving your parents about Michael's age is a terrible first move. That says you think there's something

wrong with it—and you won't just be saying that to your parents, AGE GAP, you'll be saying it to Michael as well.

And let's say things work out with Michael. The lie you told that first Christmas will only serve to make things more awkward after you finally tell them the truth about your boyfriend's age. And if your parents are like other mildly or wildly homophobic parents, i.e., if they're inclined to regard the man who sodomizes their son as a negative influence in his life, they may not believe the lie was your idea. They'll think this creepily youthful older man—this man who showed up in their home wearing a suit made out of the skins of younger gay men—encouraged their son to lie to them so they wouldn't object to the relationship in the early stages, when their objections might have had the ability to derail it.

Finally, AGE GAP, if your older boyfriend is concerned you may be too immature for him—not all young people are immature and not all immature people are young, but this shit does correlate—telling him you're still in the lie-to-mommy-and-daddy stage might prompt him to end this relationship. **LA**

Send letters to mail@savagelove.net. Download the Savage Lovecast every Tuesday at thestranger.com. **@fakedansavage**



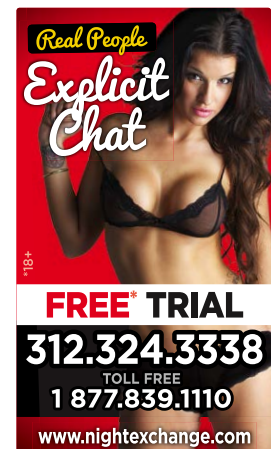
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EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME



NEW

Bad Examples 2/8, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/14, 11 AM
Baroness, Deafheaven, Zeal & Ardor 3/31, 6:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Beats Antique 2/1, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Adrian Belew 4/4, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 12/14, 8 AM **♫**
Spencer Brown 3/15, 10 PM, Sound-Bar
Chicago Open Air with System of a Down, Tool, Ghost, Prodigy, Meshuggah, Gojira, Beartooth, and more 5/18-19, SeatGeek Stadium, Bridgeway, on sale Fri 12/14, noon
Claypool Lennon Delirium 4/26, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Com Truise, Jack Grace 4/3, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 18+
Copeland 4/11, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Cosmic Gate 3/15, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM
Cupcakke 3/21, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Destructo, Redlight 1/11, 9 PM, Park West, 18+
Donna the Buffalo 5/17, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Stella Donnelly 3/29, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Graves 2/22, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+
Health 4/20, 8:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Imogen Heap, Guy Sigsworth 5/14, 7:30 PM, the Vic, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 18+
High Kings 3/12-13, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/13, noon **♫**
Thomas Jack 1/18, 10 PM, Sound-Bar
Kami, DuffleBagBuru 1/4, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

King Crimson 9/10, 8 PM, Auditorium Theatre, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM
The KVB 3/29, 9 PM, Empty Bottle
Let's Eat Grandma 4/9, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+
Like a Storm, Royal Tusk, Afterlife 2/21, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Lily & Madeleine 3/2, 7 PM, Schubas **♫**
Liquid Stranger, LSDream 2/22, 9 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+
Doug Martsch 1/19, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 12/14, 8 AM **♫**
Michigan Rattlers 1/26, 8:30 PM, Schubas, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 18+
Monolord 4/26, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Mormor 4/26, 8 PM, Sleeping Village, 18+
Muse, Walk the Moon 4/12, 8 PM, United Center, on sale Fri 12/14, 9 AM
My Brightest Diamond 5/9, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 18+
Anna Nalick 5/3, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Justin Nozuka, Craig Cardiff 3/4, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+
Ocean Alley 6/10, 8:30 PM, Schubas, 18+
Papa Roach, Asking Alexandria, Bad Wolves 8/23, 7 PM, Aragon Ballroom, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Jerry Paper 3/23, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Perturbator 5/9, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Picture This 5/5, 7 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Chuck Prophet & the Mission Express 3/15, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/14, 11 AM
Psychedelic Porn Crumpets, Frankie & the Witch Fingers 3/3, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Role Model 2/2, 8 PM, Schubas **♫**
Rusko 1/25, 10 PM, Sound-Bar
Martin Sexton 4/12-13, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/13, noon **♫**
Soledad 5/22, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 12/14, 8 AM **♫**
Marco Antonio Solis 3/31, 7 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont, on sale Fri 12/14, noon
JD Souther & Karla Bonoff 3/3, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/13, noon **♫**
Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes 4/10, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Vince Staples, JPEGmafia 3/12, 8:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 18+
Steep Canyon Rangers 3/10, 3 and 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM **♫**
Patrick Sweeney 2/16, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/14, 11 AM
Toh Kay 2/1, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM, 17+
Oliver Tree 2/26, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall **♫**
Trisomie 21 3/9, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle
Wet, Kilo Kish 3/12, 6:30 PM, Metro **♫**
Luke Winslow-King 1/11, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, on sale Fri 12/14, 11 AM
Wisn y Yandel 6/7, 8 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM
Rachael Yamagata 1/29-30, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Thu 12/13, noon **♫**
Yoshi Flower 2/5, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

UPDATED

Taylor Bennett 1/19, 7 PM, Metro, rescheduled from 12/22 **♫**
Boy Harsher 2/8 and 2/10, 9 PM, Empty Bottle, second show added

Ariana Grande 4/7-8, 7:30 PM, United Center, second show added, on sale Fri 12/14, 10 AM
Rolling Stones 6/21 and 6/25, 7:30 PM, Soldier Field, second show added

UPCOMING

Aurora, Talos 3/1, 7:30 PM, Metro **♫**
Bad Boy Bill 1/19, 10 PM, the Mid
Basta 2/3, 7 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Body/Head 3/7, 7:30 PM, Art Institute of Chicago
Cannibal Corpse, Morbid Angel, Necrot 3/4, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
Mariah Carey 3/11, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Cherry Glazerr 2/23, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Corrosion of Conformity, Crowbar, Weedeater 2/9, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Daughters, Blanc Mass 3/8, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+
Dead & Company 6/14-15, 7 PM, Wrigley Field
Direct Hit!, Copyrights 1/26, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
Dream Theater 3/29, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Fleetwood Mac 3/1, 8 PM, United Center
Flesh Eaters 3/10, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall
Marty Friedman 2/13, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+
G-Herbo, City Girls, Jacquees, Summer Walker, Queen Key 12/28, 8 PM, Chicago Theatre
Gang of Four 2/13, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **♫**
Hatebreed, Obituary, Terror 4/11, 6:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+
High on Fire 1/22, 8 PM, Metro, 18+
Hives, Refused 5/20, 7 PM, the Vic, 18+
Judas Priest 5/25, 8 PM, Rosemont Theater, Rosemont
Mark Knopfler 9/1, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre

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GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

IN SEPTEMBER 2017, Jesa Espinoza and Rosemary Villaseñor opened **Joyride Records** in the Ukrainian Village storefront at 1914 W. Chicago that had previously housed Permanent Records. But Joyride is saying good-bye to that space—its final day will be Sunday, December 16, and until then it's discounting part of its inventory for a **moving sale**. Espinoza says Joyride will take a couple months off while he seeks out a south-side location for the store, and he's got his eyes on Bridgeport.

Chicago garage-punk maniacs **Mannequin Men** broke up in 2015, ending a 12-year run of careening live shows, mildly scandalous album covers, and powerhouse jams (on three albums and a slew of singles). At the time, guitarist **Ethan D'Ercole** told the Reader, "I can't imagine that we won't play together in some project down the line." Now they're doing just that... and the project is Mannequin Men! On Saturday, December 15, at the **Empty Bottle**, the original lineup will celebrate the band's 15th anniversary. Drummer **Seth Bohn** says they've mellowed a bit: "As we've been rehearsing those songs, it's almost as though those are cover songs of some other band. I'm like... why were we so mad back then?"

Earlier this month, the Chicago Loop Alliance launched an underground (literally) pop-up art series called **Short-Cuts** in the **Chicago Pedway**. Gossip Wolf is stoked about the contribution of local sound artist **Jeff Kolar**, an exploration of background music called **Music for Phone Booths** (also to be released as an album). Five vintage phone booths scattered around the pedway level of the City Hall and County Building (121 N. LaSalle) will play his recordings, made with electronics, voice, and an 1863 pump organ, from noon to 1 PM on Wednesday, December 12, and from 5 to 6 PM on Thursday, December 13. At 12:15 PM on Thursday, Kolar will discuss the project at the **Space p11** gallery, on the pedway level at 55 E. Randolph. —J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.

»»»»»»»»»» 2018/2019 ««««««««««

UPCOMING SHOWS



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- 12/15 Sister Hazel
- 12/16 Sister Hazel Brunch on The Back Porch Stage
- 12/16 The Lox
- 12/18 4th Annual Timbuck2 Forever Tribute
- 12/19 Tributes to Pearl Jam, Foo Fighters, Soundgarden & STP
- 12/20 Tributes to Korn, RATM, AIC & Limp Bizkit
- 12/21 All Time Low **LOW TICKET WARNING**
- 12/22 Saved by the 90s
- 12/26 Tributes to 80's Hair Metal
- 12/27 Tributes to Slipknot, Deftones, Marilyn Manson & Rob Zombie
- 12/28 Bruce In The USA
- 12/29 The Selena Experience
- 1/4 KICK - The INXS Experience
- 1/5 Trippin Billies w/ Dan Hubbard Band
- 1/11 97.1 FM The Drive Presents Led Zeppelin 2 Jimmy Page 75th Birthday Celebration
- 1/12 97.1 FM The Drive Presents
50th Anniversary of Led Zeppelin II played by Led Zeppelin 2
- 1/18 G. Love & Special Sauce

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SCHUBAS 12/27

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LINCOLN HALL 12/30

THE HOOD INTERNET
SUBTERRANEAN 12/31

SCREAMING FEMALES
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- 12.28-29** **MACY GRAY**
- 1.3-4** **MUSIQ SOULCHILD**
- 1.5** **TALIB KWELI**
- 1.13** **CORKY SIEGEL'S CHAMBER BLUES FEAT. TRACY NELSON**
- 1.14-15** **STEVE EARLE**
- 1.24-25** **RANDY BACHMAN (OF THE GUESS WHO)**
- 1.29-30** **RACHAEL YAMAGATA**
- 2.4-5** **MS. LISA FISCHER & GRAND BATON**



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12.17-18

TAB BENOIT



12.19-20

KURT ELLING
2 NIGHTS, 2 UNIQUE SHOWS



12.21-23

MICHAEL MCDERMOTT
MISCHIEF & MISTLETOE



12.30-1.1

AVERY* SUNSHINE
NEW YEAR'S SHOWS

UPCOMING SHOWS

- 12.16** **VIENNA TENG**
- 12.25** **CHRISTMAS FOR THE JEWS**
- 1.6** **SONS OF THE NEVER WRONG WITH MICHAEL SMITH**
- 1.7** **DAN TEDESCO**
- 1.8** **SHANE KOYCZAN**
- 1.10** **SLICE - FILM SCREENING**
- 1.11** **THREE WOMEN & THE TRUTH: MARY GAUTHIER, ELIZA GILKYSON & GRETCHEN PETERS**
- 1.12** **MAYSA**
- 1.16** **EAGLEMANIA**
- 1.17** **PARIS COMBO**
- 1.18** **SKYLAR GREY**
- 1.19** **MELANIE FIONA**
- 1.20** **JODEE LEWIS & JONAS FRIDDLE**
- 1.21** **LET FREEDOM RING, CHICAGO! A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**
- 1.23** **THE HOT SARDINES**
- 1.27** **SUSAN WERNER**
- 1.28** **TREY MCLAUGHLIN & THE SOUNDS OF ZAMAR**
- 1.31-2.2** **ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO WITH DON ANTONIO BAND - THE CROSSING TOUR**



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